

# IGS Global Groomer Health Study 2025–2026

## Summary

Thanks to nearly **4,000 grooming professionals worldwide**, this study provides the first international, evidence-based overview of the real health conditions in our profession.

Below is a detailed summary of the key findings and what they mean for groomers.

## Why this study matters

Grooming is a passion-driven profession, deeply rooted in animal welfare and technical expertise. However, this study confirms what many groomers experience daily but rarely see acknowledged:

 **Grooming is a high-risk occupation**, physically, sensorially, and emotionally.

Until now, these risks had never been analyzed globally, across countries, working environments, and career stages.

This study changes that.

## Who participated

- **~4,000 groomers** from Europe, North & South America, Australia, Asia, and Africa
- **~96% women**, reflecting the reality of the profession
- A highly experienced panel:
  - Over **60%** with more than 8 years of experience
- Nearly **half are salon owners**, often combining grooming and business management

This makes the results highly representative and reliable.

## Key findings – What the study reveals

### 1. Accidents, injuries & trauma are the norm, not the exception

- **~87%** of groomers have been injured by a dog
- **~91%** of cat groomers have been injured by a cat
- **~62%** experienced accidents related to equipment or salon conditions
- **~31%** report emotional trauma after an incident (bites, attacks, accidents)

 Injuries are **structural**, not isolated events.

They affect physical safety, confidence, stress levels, and animal handling quality.

### 2. Musculoskeletal disorders affect almost everyone

- **~79%** suffer from back pain
- **~84%** report joint or muscle pain (shoulders, wrists, hands, knees, neck)

- Nearly **40%** say pain could force them to stop grooming long term

These are **chronic, cumulative issues**, linked to posture, lifting, repetitive movements, lack of breaks, and poor ergonomics.

### 3. Noise exposure and hearing damage are critical and underestimated

- **~65%** work without any hearing protection
- **~39%** already report hearing problems
- Groomers are exposed daily to **90–110 dB** (dryers, barking)

→ Grooming is comparable to industrial noise exposure—but without equivalent protection or training.

### 4. Eye strain affects half of the profession

- **~50%** experience visual discomfort or eye strain
- Common symptoms:
  - eye fatigue,
  - dry or irritated eyes,
  - blurred vision,
  - light sensitivity
- **Over 50%** never use eye protection

Vision is a core professional tool, yet eye health is largely ignored.

### 5. Respiratory exposure is a silent occupational risk

- **~22%** developed respiratory issues since entering the profession
- Symptoms include:
  - chronic cough,
  - throat and nasal irritation,
  - allergies,
  - asthma,
  - breathing difficulties
- **~47%** never wear a mask
- Hair, dust, aerosols, sprays, and poor ventilation are constant exposure sources

Respiratory problems are **progressive and cumulative**, often underestimated until they become limiting.

### 6. Skin damage and hair splinters are almost universal

- **~31%** developed hand skin problems after starting grooming
- **~87%** experienced hair splinters

- Symptoms range from pain and inflammation to infection and medical treatment
- Nearly **half never use gloves**

Skin exposure is constant and often combined with chemical and biological risks.

## 7. Nutrition, hydration & heat are major hidden stressors

- Only **15%** always eat proper meals at work
- Nearly **80%** do not drink enough water consistently
- **Two thirds** work in hot or poorly ventilated environments
- Common symptoms:
  - headaches,
  - fatigue,
  - dizziness,
  - excessive sweating,
  - muscle cramps

These factors directly affect energy, concentration, safety, and long-term health.

## 8. Pregnancy risks are largely ignored

- **~24%** worked while pregnant
- **Over 80%** were not properly informed about risks
- Exposure includes:
  - chemicals,
  - aerosols,
  - heavy lifting,
  - noise,
  - stress

Pregnancy safety is a **major blind spot** in the profession.

## 9. Zoonotic infections exist, even if underreported

- **~9%** report a diagnosed zoonotic infection
- Most common: **ringworm**
- Transmission occurs through skin contact, micro-lesions, tools, and environments

These risks intersect strongly with skin, eye, and respiratory exposure.

## 10. Mental health is one of the most fragile pillars

- **~78%** experience work-related mental or emotional difficulties

- >70% feel emotionally overwhelmed regularly
- ~44% have considered quitting grooming due to mental health
- Main stressors:
  - physical exhaustion,
  - client pressure,
  - time constraints,
  - financial instability,
  - working alone

This is a **silent but profound crisis** affecting career sustainability.

## 11. Training gaps explain many of these problems

- ~66% received insufficient health & safety training
- ~75% were not properly taught ergonomics
- ~69% received no respiratory protection training
- ~66% were never taught to read SDS or understand chemical risks
- ~43% want further health-related training but haven't had access

Most groomers learn risks **through injury**, not education.

## What the IGS will do next

This study is not an end.

It is a **starting point**.

Based on these findings, the IGS will focus on:

- health awareness and prevention resources,
- ergonomic and safety guidance,
- mental health and emotional support tools,
- pregnancy and vulnerable period information,
- collaboration with educators and brands,
- accessible training and professional references,
- strengthening the global grooming community.

No imposed rules.

No blame.

Only **information, prevention, and collective responsibility**.