

Some Athletes Believe Doping Substances Are Effective

Most elite athletes consider doping substances "are effective" in improving performance though they do recognize that this constitutes cheating and can endanger health and entail the risk of sanction, according to a recently concluded study.

It was also disclosed by the study (*Doping in Sport: A Review of Elite Athletes' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Knowledge*. Morente-Sánchez J, Zabala M. [Sports Medicine](#). 2013 Mar 27) conducted by researchers from the Department of Physical and Sports Education at the University of Granada that the reasons why athletes start to take doping substances are to attain athletic success, improve performance, financial gains, improve recovery, prevent nutritional deficiencies, and because other athletes also use them. This research also showed a widespread belief among elite athletes that the fight against doping is inefficient and biased, and that the sanctions imposed are not severe enough.

Researchers Mikel Zabala and Jaime Morente-Sánchez revealed their findings in an article in the journal "*Sports Medicine*" after analyzing the beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes of elite athletes from all over the world about doping. The involved researchers conducted a literature review of 33 studies on the subject published between 2000 and 2011, in order to analyze the present situation and, as a result of this, to act by the formulation of specific, efficient [anti-doping strategies](#).

The study results revealed that athletes participating in team-based sports appear to be less susceptible to using doping substances and it was emphasized by the authors that anti-doping controls in team sports are clearly both quantitatively and qualitatively less exhaustive. It was indicated by the study that doctors and other specialists are less involved and coaches seem to be the principle influence and source of information for athletes when it comes to starting or not starting to take banned substances. The researchers remarked that there is still a lack of knowledge among athletes about the problems entailed in using banned substances and methods even though they are becoming increasingly familiar with anti-doping rules and therefore there should be remedied through appropriate educational programs. They also suggested that a substantial lack of information exists among elite athletes about dietary supplements and the secondary effects of performance-enhancing substances.

The University of Granada researchers, in the light of these results, consider it imperative to plan and conduct information and prevention campaigns to influence the attitudes of athletes towards doping and the culture surrounding this banned practice. Mikel Zabala and Jaime Morente-Sánchez conclude that we should not just dedicate money almost exclusively to performing anti-doping tests, as we currently do and to improve the situation, it would be enough to designate at least a small part of this budget to educational and prevention programs that encourage athletes to reject the use of banned substances and methods. One pioneering example in their opinion, in this context, is the Spanish Cycling Federation's "Preventing to win" project.

In another development, a study published online in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* has revealed that the use of recombinant human erythropoietin is prohibited among athletes because it reportedly enhances performance but there is no scientific evidence that it does so.