

## **Doping Is 'Endemic' In Cycling, Says Whistleblower**

Dan Stevens, the whistleblower at the centre of the investigation by *Sunday Times* into the practices of Dr [Mark Bonar](#), has issued a warning that doping is an "endemic" problem in cycling.

The 40-year-old amateur cyclist, who was prescribed banned performance enhancing products by Dr Bonar, said doping may have become far more sophisticated in the upper echelons of the sport and added other doctors like Bonar are operating. Stevens made these comments while providing evidence in front of a parliamentary committee. The chair of [UK Anti-Doping](#) (UKAD) admitted to shortcomings in its handling of intelligence relating to Dr Mark Bonar.

Speaking before the parliamentary committee, Stevens explained how he was able to pick up drugs like Erythropoietin (EPO) at high street chemists. The amateur cyclist added the problem does not stop at Dr Bonar and further commented that other doctors around the country are engaging in similar practices. Stevens said there are a number of other doctors working out of anti-ageing clinics and added there are a number of anti ageing doctors in the UK advertising that they will provide human growth hormone and testosterone for anti-ageing purposes.

Stevens described how met Bonar on the internet and ended up with prescriptions for EPO, human growth hormone, and thyroxin over the course of several visits. The cyclist said he experienced "huge effects" and a "15 to 20 per cent performance gain" during the three-month period in which he was taking the products.

Dan Stevens was called upon by UK Anti-Doping in January 2014 to provide an out-of-competition sample but refused to comply. He was given a ban of two years and then approached UK Anti-Doping to provide information relating to Bonar in the hope of seeing that ban reduced. Stevens said he provided evidence on Bonar but was told by the body's head of legal, Graham Arthur, that it was "of little to no use" and his ban was upheld. Stevens later provided evidence to Cycling Independent Reform Commission (CIRC) that recommended his ban be reduced to 21 months, which was honored by UKAD.

Stevens repeatedly used the word "endemic" for describing the issues faced by cycling and the sport as a whole. He commented there is not a lot of testing going on in amateur cycling and added we are a long way behind what athletes could be using at elite level. Stevens remarked people at amateur level are potentially using what elites were using 15 years ago and the elites could be using far, far more sophisticated stuff. Stevens also remarked Erythropoietin has been around for over 15 years and there are a strong of new substances and chemicals that are

"potentially undetectable" that could be used on top of in or even to mask it while highlighting the names of Beloranib, Myo-inositol trispyrophosphate (ITTP), GW1516, and AICAR.

The cyclist also said the problem starts before people are becoming athletes. Stevens highlighted the easy availability of information on the internet regarding doping practices and on sports forums like [bodybuilding](#) and claimed it is so easy for any athlete of any level to get introduced to banned products even at their local gym.