

Project Description

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Tier 2

Project Summary:

WADA has repeatedly encouraged social science research projects to take a regional perspective. The Caribbean is one region where systematic research on doping has been absent, despite calls for action (Acevedo et al., 2011). The paucity of doping research on Caribbean countries is surprising given the region's strong sporting tradition and history. Sport is part of the Caribbean's regional identity (CARICOM Commission on Youth Development, 2010), as witnessed by their success internationally. For instance, at the 2016 Olympic Games, 5% of Gold medals were won by Caribbean countries (Jordens, 2016).

Research on doping in regions neglected by scholars reports that athletes' knowledge of doping and supplements is poor, even among professional and elite athletes (e.g., Barghi et al., 2015; Muwonge et al., 2015). More education is often prescribed, yet for programs to be effective they need to be well-planned and take into account regional and cultural particulars (Backhouse et al., 2009; Backhouse, 2015). While the Code (WADA 2015) requires anti-doping organizations (ADO) to develop and implement education programs, many organizations lack the necessary resources to do so (Morente-Sánchez & Zabala, 2013). Partnerships between academic institutions and ADO, such as described in this proposal, are therefore encouraged.

Backhouse (2015) recommends anti-doping education targets youth as this is a time where their attitudes and values are forming (Döring et al., 2015;). This has implications for doping behavior (Ntoumanis, et al., 2014). In the Caribbean however, no known research examines young athletes and doping. Even research on youth substance abuse in a Caribbean context is limited (Peacock et al., 2018). Yet there are concerns that substance use among adolescents is rising (Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, 2016). This is exacerbated by the Caribbean's young population where approximately a quarter are around the adolescent age range (Pan American Health Organization, 2018).

Given these circumstances, it is apropos that research on doping on Caribbean adolescent athletes commence. A suitable starting point is to chronicle young athletes' knowledge of performance-enhancing substances. This includes supplements, as use is associated with risk of

doping (Hurst et al., 2019). Thus, one objective of this proposal is to provide such an account by surveying, via questionnaire, young athletes at Caribbean sporting events. Moreover, while research in a Caribbean context is sparse, research on adolescents has been increasing (Backhouse et al., 2015). One research area is the role of influential others on young athletes. Athletes at this age are often confused about doping (Duncan et al., 2018), and are influenced by those closest to them (Woolf et al., 2014). However, our understanding of how this influence occurs is limited. Hence the second objective of this proposal is to explore how close others influence adolescent athletes, particularly concerning the formation of social norms. A parallel study involving a questionnaire and interviews will, therefore, be conducted. The proposal's outcomes will provide ADO insights into how interpersonal communication among adolescent athletes contributes to the formation of social norms on performance enhancement.