

Project LUCIDI

A cross-national longitudinal investigation of the contribution of efficacy belief systems and interpersonal appraisals on doping use in team sports

The proposed project departs from the doping-research experiences of three well-established European groups of scholars and offers the possibility of integrating these experiences in an investigation of the belief systems and appraisals that might regulate doping intentions and doping use in young team athletes. The focus on team sport athletes and the cross-national effort of the investigation (i.e., Italy, Germany and Greece) represent the novel elements of this proposed project.

The proposed investigation will be conducted over the course of two years. Broadly, the first part of year 1 of the project will be a sort of pilot phase of the project during which the proponent group of scholars will gather, from each national site and from a relatively small sample of team athletes, information concerning the set of instruments and measurements to be used in a second phase of the project. The remaining part of year 1 and a large part of year 2 of the proposed project will instead be devoted to the actual longitudinal investigation. During this phase, a relatively large sample of nearly 600 team athletes, balanced across the three European sites, will be recruited and interviewed in two separate assessment occasions over the course of about five – six months to gather information on the same set of instruments and measurements developed during phase 1 of the project. In this phase of the project, the proponent group will evaluate the general hypothesis that team athletes' doping intentions and actual use may depend on specific elaborations, views, and appraisals partly stemming from the specific contexts characterizing the sport experiences typically encountered within teams and among teammates. The longitudinal data will primarily serve the purpose of examining the model of effects controlling for the temporal stability of substance use and, therefore, evaluating whether they influence changes in athletes' doping use over time.

The longitudinal approach of the proposed investigation and the presence of three different European sites should allow to rigorously evaluate the tenets of the proponents' guiding model.

More specifically, the significance of the proposed research project firstly rests on the possibility of extending existing research findings on doping use gathered at the individual level to the specific context of team sports. Secondly, the investigation could allow to generalize the overall model of psychological effects evidenced in nationally based research to an international European context (i.e., Italy, Germany and Greece). This research effort, therefore, represents a novel and valuable endeavor, which has the chance of adding to our scientific understanding of doping use.