

## **Project Kavussanu**

### **A cross-cultural approach to a cross-cultural issue: Psychosocial factors and doping in young athletes**

Research investigating psychosocial factors associated with doping intentions is important for the fight against doping. However, most studies have focused primarily on motivational variables. This is surprising, given that in addition to being a motivated behavior, doping is a “moral” behavior: Using Performance Enhancing Drugs (PED) to take an unfair advantage over the opponent is cheating. Thus, to fully understand doping behavior, it is important to consider both moral and motivational variables. The current project draws from social cognitive theories of motivation and morality to examine doping intentions in young athletes and has three objectives.

Our first objective is to determine whether performance motivational climate (a motivational variable), moral atmosphere of the team, and moral identity (two moral variables) predict PED intentions in adolescent team sport athletes. Performance motivational climate refers to the values that are dominant in the team, and is reflected in the coach’s behavior. For example, by rewarding only the best athletes the coach shows that only high ability matters; this variable has been positively associated with more favorable attitudes toward doping. Moral atmosphere concerns team perceptions of what is acceptable behavior in the team. For example, taking drugs may be viewed as acceptable behavior in one team but not another. Finally, moral identity is the importance one places on being a moral person. Although both moral atmosphere and moral identity have been associated with cheating, none has been investigated in relation to doping intentions in sport.

Our second objective is to understand how these three variables - performance climate, moral atmosphere, and moral identity - influence doping intentions. Their effects could occur via ego orientation, moral disengagement, and anticipated guilt, respectively. This issue is important because it has implications for developing anti doping interventions. For example, if performance motivational climate influences doping intentions through ego orientation, we know that we can focus on changing performance climate in order to affect ego orientation, which will then influence doping intentions. We will test a conceptual model that involves hypothesized relationships among the variables discussed above.

Our third objective is to examine this conceptual model in three European countries. Cross-cultural research in doping intentions is scarce but important, as it establishes whether a proposed model is specific to a single culture or can be more universal. This can give us more confidence about the importance of the identified predictors of doping intentions.

To achieve these objectives, we will recruit team sport athletes from three countries: UK, Denmark, and Greece. Participants will complete questionnaires measuring the aforementioned variables. Doping intentions will be measured with questions referring to hypothetical doping scenarios, while the variables outlined above will be assessed with established measures, which will be adapted when necessary to doping, and translated into Danish and Greek. It is anticipated that this research will enhance our understanding of why athletes use PED in sport.