

Preventing doping in sport: An investigation of the attitudes and perceived role of high performance coaches

In recent years, a growing volume of social science literature has attempted to examine the epidemiology of doping (Laure, 1997; Waddington et al., 2005), and to measure attitudes to doping (Alaranta et al., 2006). The majority of participants in this type of research have been from school (Laure et al., 2004) or university student populations (Tricker & Connolly, 1997). Given the widely recognised influence that coaches have on their athletes' beliefs, motivations and behaviours (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), surprisingly few studies have sought to utilise coach populations in research on doping. This is an unusual oversight, particularly in light of the oft-cited influence of their coach by athletes who have admitted to doping (e.g. Genevieve Jeanson, Ben Johnson, Kelli White). Of the few published studies that have employed coaches as participants, few have used psychometrically validated questionnaires; most are simply descriptive in nature and the majority were conducted over 10 years ago (Laure et al., 2001; Starkey et al., 1994). Further, one published coach study has used a sound theoretical basis for their investigation, namely the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB; Fung & Yuan, 2006). However, the validity of Fung and Yuan's survey was brought into question by Backhouse et al. (2007), in their WADA-commissioned review of the social science literature on doping. To overcome these shortcomings and to fill a gap in the literature, our proposed study will expand and improve on Fung & Yuan's study by measuring coaches' attitudes, subjective norms, perceived personal control and behavioural intent in relation to doping and anti-doping in sport. A published scale measuring performance enhancement attitudes (PEA; Petroczi & Aidman, 2009) will be utilised, which will allow for comparison with a previously tested athlete sample (Kirby, Moran & Guerin, 2007). The subjective norm, personal control and behavioural intent variables will be tested in accordance with guidelines for constructing TPB questionnaires, (Ajzen, 2006). In addition, our sample of coaches will be at a more elite level than the 'community' coaches employed by Fung and Yuan. Our proposed study will also expand on the findings of earlier WADA-funded studies (Moran et al., 2008). The first of these studies found that certain coach behaviours were significantly correlated with athletes' doping attitudes. Our proposed study will examine whether coaches perceive that their own behaviour can have an influence on how their athletes regard performance enhancement by illegal means. The second study involved interviews with admitted dopers.

Certain motivating factors were cited by these athletes as being influential in their decision to start using banned substances. Our proposed study will examine whether the actual doping motivations of athletes

are similar to the motivations perceived to be important by coaches. This information will be useful in determining the level of understanding coaches have about the doping dilemma faced by some athletes. The final part of our proposed study will elicit coaches' opinions regarding the current testing and sanctions process, and ask for suggestions on how anti-doping interventions might be improved.