

Learning about psycho-social determinants of doping behaviour through the testimony of sanctioned athletes

Project summary

This study is part of a comprehensive project called WINDOP, which will be conducted by AC&T Sport Consulting, a private sports psychology practice based in Lausanne, in partnership with the Sports Science Institute of the University of Lausanne (ISSEP). The main objectives of the overall WINDOP programme are to interview sanctioned athletes with the primary goal to gain knowledge about the psychological and psycho-social determinants of their doping behaviour.

To achieve the goals of WINDOP–research, the investigators will have the opportunity to interview athletes who have been condemned for their substance abuse by their International Federation, and are willing to speak out about their deviant behaviour. In particular, research will focus on the motivational orientations of the athletes, the perception they have about their environment, and the cognitive appraisal they have when facing situational challenges like career transitions, injury or competitive pressure (in accordance with current research and the currently used theoretical models, cf. Donahue et al., 2006; Kleinert and Jüngling, 2007, Lentillon-Ohl, in press).

Data will be gathered through in-depth interviews, the content of which will be analysed through sound qualitative research methods. As the number of applicants for the programme is expected to increase along the years, research will be complemented with quantitative data sampling based on questionnaires and inventories, measuring factors such as motivational orientation (EMS-28, cf. Brière et al., 1995), type of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003), coping strategies, and related psychological variables. By focusing on the athletes' retrospective narratives, the project will throw a light on the psychological determinants that are decisive for young athletes in specific sport transitions they go through.