

PROJECT SUMMARY

The impact of changes to the Prohibited Substance List on use of over-the-counter medications by athletes

The Prohibited Substance List was developed to highlight those substances that are performance enhancing, deleterious to health and against the ethics of sport. Used by athletes, coaches and governing body officials, amongst others, the List acts as a guide to avoid drug use, as an educational tool and as a means of imposing rules and sanctions following substance abuse. In January 2004 WADA removed several substances from the Prohibited Substance List and placed them on a Monitoring Program. These substances were largely stimulants (e.g. pseudoephedrine, phenylpropanolamine, phenylephrine, caffeine) contained in many over-the-counter preparations for the treatment of symptoms associated with upper respiratory tract infection. Stimulants such as ephedrine, cathine, L-methylamphetamine and methylephedrine were retained on the Prohibited Substance List and placed on a specified substance list. This list allows WADA to identify drugs which are particularly susceptible to unintentional anti-doping rule violations because of their availability in medicinal products or which are less likely to be successfully abused as doping agents. The purpose of the current research is to assess the impact of these changes to the List on patterns of use amongst athletes and on athletes views and attitudes regarding their use in sport. This will be achieved by collecting recent drug testing data from WADA accredited doping control laboratories, which will be used to assess the use of such substances in competition. These data can be used as a comparison with published data (pre 2004) to assess any changes in the prevalence of such drug use since 2004. The main thrust of the research will be to ascertain athletes views and attitudes on the use of such drugs and on the changes made to the Prohibited Substance List. These views will be assessed by structured questionnaire. Qualitative data will allow evaluation of the impact, changes to doping control regulations has on athletes views and attitudes regarding the use of readily available stimulants both permissible and prohibited by WADA.