

# **The relationship between goal orientation and attitudes toward doping in sport: Knowledge about and attitudes toward doping among Polish athletes**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The aims of the project were: to diagnose knowledge and attitudes of athletes toward doping-free sport and anti-doping policy and to determine if there is a relationship between attitudes toward doping and achievement goal orientations of athletes.

The direction of examined attitudes was positive, their strength however was rather moderate. The strongest was the attitude toward anti-doping controls (M 4.12 SD .82), the weakest (and close to the point of neutrality or ambivalence) in attitude toward sanctions (M 3.68 SD .79). Significant differences in attitudes were observed in gender and age. Female athletes declared more favourable attitudes than males in all four measures. Young adults declared most favourable attitudes toward: controls, sanctions and ethical rationale of an anti-doping policy; while adolescent athletes expressed the lowest behavioral readiness to use prohibited substances and methods. In all four cases attitudes of adult athletes were the least favourable. Contrary to what could be expected based on literature on sportspersonship, there were no differences between team and individual sports.

In respect to the relationship between goal orientations and attitudes toward doping-free sport it was found that athletes who were high task/low ego oriented declared the most favorable attitudes toward doping-free sport and anti-doping policy, while athletes who were low task/high ego oriented declared the least favourable attitudes (close to neutrality or ambivalence). In all measures these goal orientations profile groups significantly differed from one another. Multiple regression analyses confirmed that ego orientation was significantly negatively related to, and task orientation was significantly positively related to attitudes toward doping. It means that with the increase in task orientation attitudes toward doping became more positive, while with the increase in ego orientation – more negative. It could be argued then that creating a motivational climate which promotes task orientation (mastery climate) may help promote more favourable attitudes toward doping-free sport and anti-doping policy. However, it should be noticed that in all cases the models explained only a small portion of variance – for total score of attitude less than 10%.

Knowledge of the athletes, measured as percentages of correct, incorrect and “don’t know” answers of included items, was found to be moderate, calling for more education. In the general indicator of knowledge (means of all items) respondents gave less than half of correct answers (45.22%). The highest percentage of correct responses was observed in items measuring “knowledge on rights and responsibilities of an athlete” (50.75%), followed by “knowledge of doping substances and methods” (45.09%), while the lowest in “knowledge about general principles and

procedures of an anti-doping policy" (41.77%). Differences in distribution of responses on the three subscales of knowledge were significant. Male athletes declared significantly better knowledge than female athletes, representatives of team sports better than representatives of individual sports (however it should be noted that in this case the comparison of percentages of correct answers of both groups by means the test of two structure indicators showed non significant difference); young adults better than adults and adolescents; and athletes with longer length of sports career better than athletes whose career were shorter. The most frequently mentioned sources of information were TV (n=527, 68.53%), followed by internet (n=415, 53.97%), and peers (n=414, 53.84%). In conclusion it could be said that knowledge of Polish athletes concerning doping and anti-doping policy is unsatisfactory and its level is related to some socio-demographical variables, like gender, age, branch of sports discipline and length of sports career. Relatively better level of knowledge was observed in items concerning awareness of rights and duties of an athlete towards anti-doping controls. Only minority of respondents drew their knowledge on doping from sources that could be regarded as reliable, with a reservation that internet – the source second in importance, was not described in details (it can be a source of reliable knowledge promoted by anti-doping bodies, like the Polish Commission Against Doping in Sport, as well as a source of web sites of doubtful value from the point of view of anti-doping policy).