

Project ZIOGAS

Effect of the level of physical fitness and game participation on attitudes toward doping of elite U-20 soccer players

Several studies have reported that prohibited substances are being used by young people with an increasing trend. Over 60% of them participate in competitive sports. The majority of participants in these studies were high school or university students from a variety of sports. However, during competition or during games of high importance where athletes are under pressure to perform their best, the number of doping cases and the use of dietary supplements increases significantly. During 2002 and 2006 FIFA World Cup 35% of the football players used dietary supplements before the match and 43% during the tournament. In addition, Canadian athletes used more than 4 dietary supplements per person during the Sydney Olympic games. There are also reports of high legal and illegal supplements and medications during very demanding sports such as during Tour De France. However, although most prevention studies have focused on social and psychological factors affecting doping behaviour, to our knowledge, no studies have examined a possible link between low physical capacity compared to the demands of the sport and doping attitude of athletes, especially on young athletes who are on the final selection step before signing professional contracts. U-20 (under 20) talented soccer players from top soccer clubs will participate in the study, since they are in the final selection step, and some of them will sign professional contracts. In addition, soccer, requires high physical demands since, during a competitive match, elite players cover an average of 10-13km at approximately 85-90% of their maximum heart rate (HRmax)^{4,13} which corresponds to approximately 75-80% of maximal oxygen uptake (VO₂max). Since they are in the final academy level they are under pressure to succeed and they also face the high physical demands of the game. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine doping and supplementation attitude and belief in young talented athletes who compete at high level during adolescent and they are under pressure to succeed. It is hypothesized that U-20 talented soccer players with limited physical capacity will have significantly more positive doping and supplementation attitude and belief compared to the more fit players. Also, players with limited competition participation during in-season will have significantly more positive doping and supplementation attitude and belief compared to starters. During in-season all soccer players will exhibit more positive doping and supplementation attitude compared to their early preseason attitude.