Understanding Why Athletes Dope
&
Framing Research to Inform and Evaluate Education Strategies

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Rob Donovan
Curtin University
r.donovan@curtin.edu.au
Topics

An understanding of why athletes dope/don’t dope:

Sport Drug Control Model

How research can inform education targets and measure effectiveness of programs:

WADA Research Package
The Sport Drug Control Model

Factors influencing an athlete’s susceptibility to and use of doping methods

An ecological perspective – the interaction between individual and environmental factors
SDCM References


The Original Model Emphasised Individual Factors

- Reference Groups
- Personality Factors
- Affordability
- Susceptibility to banned PES use
- Behaviour
- Legitimacy
- Personal Morality
- Availability
- Benefit Appraisal
- Threat Appraisal
The Revised Model Explicitly Includes Broader Environmental Influences

- Benefit Appraisal
- Threat Appraisal
- Use of legal supplements and technologies

- Societal and broad sport context

- Reference Groups
- Personality Factors

- Susceptibility to banned PES use
- Affordability
- Behaviour
- Availability

- Legitimacy
- Personal Morality
Benefit Appraisal: the rewards of success ...

Perceived likelihood of sufficient performance enhancement to achieve desired benefits: very small increments can result in huge rewards.

What’s the pay-off? What good things can happen?
Benefit Appraisal: the rewards of success

Perceived rewards

- Personal acclaim/fame
- Financial returns
- Personal achievement
- Need for recognition due to low self-esteem

What motivates those who facilitate/encourage athletes to dope?
Threat Appraisal

Perceived health effects

Perceived negative effects on performance

Perceived likelihood of being tested

Perceived likelihood of drug being detected;

Perceived severity of consequences of positive test

What are the deterrenets for entourage and others potentially and actually involved in doping?

• What’s the cost? What bad things could happen?
Reference groups

All those individuals and groups whose opinion the athlete is concerned about:

What are these groups’ opinions with respect to doping?

To what extent would the athlete take their opinion into account when considering whether or not to dope?
Primary & Secondary Reference groups

- Coaches, trainers
- Family/partner
- Team-mates
- Competition - local, national, international
- Exercise scientists, pharmacologists, sports doctors, sports psychologists
- Sporting spectators
- Sports & other journalists
- Sponsors/Corporate
- Government/Politicians
Reference groups as message source

It's only a suggestion, but let's not forget who's
Legitimacy

People obey what they consider to be just laws - and where the authority introducing and enforcing the laws is perceived to have the right to dictate such behavior.
Legitimacy

Perceived fairness of testing procedures
Perceived accuracy of testing procedures
Perceived fairness in selection for testing

“The key to success is to ensure an understanding of why rules are in place and communication of what those rules mean” (Rob Koehler, 2013)
Morality: Ethics & Sport Values

Respect for rules
Respect for competitors
Fair play & honesty

Moral stance a major protective factor

Moral disengagement allows rationalisation of decision to dope
Personality factors

Some personality types are more likely than others to be motivated by different rewards of success ...

Some personality types are more likely than others to be vulnerable to various reference groups’ pressure ...

Some personality types are more likely than others to be susceptible to using all sorts of potentially performance enhancing methods ...
Personality/Psychological factors

- Self-presentational concerns
- Fear of failure
- Perfectionism
- Public athletic identity
- Risk taking propensity
- Optimism-Pessimism
- Self-esteem
Some just want to win ...
To mark the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt, Westminster Abbey will open Henry V’s secret chapel, built by him so that prayers for his soul could be said for eternity.
Some just want to win ...

Henry V knew that the church prohibited the killing of unarmed captives.
He knew there was no gallantry in murder.
And he knew that what he ordered was against the laws of God, man and honour.

But he did it anyway, because he wanted to win.
Some just want to win ...

Armstrong knew that the rules prohibited doping

He knew there was no gallantry in doping
And he knew that doping was against the laws of
God, man and honour.

But he did it anyway, because he wanted to win.
Availability & Affordability

Some reference groups are suppliers or facilitate supply – especially medically supervised use

Role of pharmaceutical companies

Recent reports & investigations show these factors go well beyond individual dealers to corporate and criminal involvement
Socio-Cultural and Sporting Sub-Culture Values: An ecological perspective
Technological change: Labour saving devices & the search for ‘miracle’ cures – advances in pharmacology

Acceptance of recreational mood altering substances: legal and illegal

Acceptance of clinical drug use: lose weight; sleep better; stay awake; …

Acceptance of self-enhancement in general: cosmetic surgery; ‘better than well’ …

The health promotion era: health as the absence of disease vs proactive steps
Socio-Cultural Values

Technological change: Labour saving devices & the search for ‘miracle’ cures – advances in pharmacology

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The health promotion era: health as the absence of disease vs proactive steps

Medicalisation of sport: the rise and rise of sports medicine

‘De-amateurisation of sport: commercialisation of elite level sport - the entertainment industry

Politics of sport – esp since 1945.

 $$$s for Gold – A Market Society

Intensification of sporting schedules

The ‘dark’ side of sport lombardi, durocher
Doping in sport: who’s to bless and who’s to blame?

Australian swimmers were offered cash bonuses for success at the London Olympics – does this sort of commercialisation cheapen sport? EPA/Barbara Walton
Applying the model & Implications for research ...

- **Society:** Sport as business
- **High Benefit Appraisal**
- **Low Threat Appraisal**
- **High Use of technologies**
- **Reference Groups pro PED**
- **Personality: High fear of failure**
- **Cheap**
- **High Susceptibility to banned PED use**
- **Likely PED use**
- **Low Legitimacy**
- **Not personal Moral issue**
- **Easily accessible online**
CALVIN AND HOBBES

I read this library book you got me. What did you think of it?
IT REALLY MADE ME SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY. IT'S GIVEN ME A LOT TO THINK ABOUT.
I'm glad you enjoyed it.
I'm glad you enjoyed it.

It's complicating my life. Don't get me any more.
WADA Research Package

• Aim: translate our knowledge of doping influences into developing standardised guidelines for anti-doping agencies to ...

  – conduct research on their populations of athletes
  – identify areas of risk that require attention
  – assess the impact of their anti-doping efforts
What the package contains

1. A standard questionnaire with basic measures of the SDCM influencing factors (and optional additional items for more extensive research)

2. Guidelines with respect to collecting data from athletes, including a sample letter to athletes

3. Guidelines for analyses and interpretations of the survey data & recommended actions where results indicate areas requiring attention.

- Also get results from Australian samples to illustrate how to analyze --- interpretation and implications
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