

*United Nations Office on Drugs and
Crime*

*Establishing
Regulations for
Performance
Enhancing Drugs*



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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is a global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime. Established in 1997 after a fusion between the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention, UNODC operates in all regions of the world through an extensive network of field offices. Most of the budget of this organization relies on the voluntary contributions of the governments, which make up about 90% of the total budget. Some of the main functions of the UNODC are: to assist Member States in their struggle against illicit drugs, crime and terrorism, to intensify efforts to fight transnational crime in all its dimensions, to redouble the efforts to implement the commitment to counter the world drug problem and to take concerted action against international terrorism (UNODC, 2018). UNODC supports countries with problems that involve the following areas:

- Organized Crime and Trafficking
- Corruption
- Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Reform
- Drug Abuse Prevention and Health
- Terrorism Prevention (UNODC, 2018)

“Performance Enhancing Drugs are substances that some people (normally athletes) inject or consume to increase the human body’s ability to perform during training sessions and sports contests. This includes common over-the-counter muscle-building supplements, recovery products, and endurance-enhancing blood doping. They might be consumed orally or via needle injection” (US, Legal, Inc., n.d.). These drugs include a vast quantity of types, chemical structure, and function, being anabolics, peptide hormones, diuretics, stimulants, narcotics, cannabinoids, and steroids; the most consumed ones (USADA, 2014). Some anti-doping controls, associations from different disciplines and the governments from different nations have been creating new laws that ban some of this drug because they have been proven to affect, not only the body but also the overall health of the consumer. Besides, the use of performance enhancing drugs violate one of the main principles of sports, the Fair Play, since they often provide athletes a physical and mental advantage over their opponents. However, “some of this substances are legally available on prescriptions or even in some medicines, mainly due to the fact that as

time passes by, laboratories produce brand new substances that most of the times work even better than the most popular enhancing drugs” (BBC Bitesize, 2014).

In addition to the use of performance-enhancing drugs, sports are not the only context where these drugs are consumed the most. Last year, the United States Special Operations Command started considering the possibility of using performance-enhancing drugs to push the abilities and endurance of its forces beyond current human limits. SOCOM is looking to increase their ability to tolerate pain, recover from injuries, and remain physically able in challenging environments. Even though Ben Chitty, the senior project manager for biomedical, human performance, and canine portfolios at U.S. SOCOM’s Science and Technology office stated that before taking such decision, they must first evaluate other possibilities such as the exploration of new nutritional supplements or other substances as well as risks the soldiers may run if they ingest some of these drugs. However, there is a big probability of having “Super Soldiers” at the SOCOM, thanks to the Performance Enhancing Drugs (Woody, 2017).

HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

In modern history, the use of performance-enhancing drugs has become a topic of high relevance and importance. During the past years, it has been really common to get to know about athletes in different disciplines that use these drugs to have a superior performance over their opponents. The use of these drugs is traced back to ancient Greece. Athletes used these types of drugs to compete in the ancient Olympic games (US, Legal, Inc., n.d.). As there were no anti-doping tests during that time and no drugs regulations, athletes were free to use as many drugs as they wanted. It was until the 1960’s that doping by professional athletes started to be recognized as a problem (CNN, 2018).

As the concern of athletes using performance-enhancing drugs increased, in 1967 “the International Olympic Committee (IOC) establishes a Medical Commission in response to an increase in the usage of performance-enhancing substances” (CNN, 2018). This commission opened the doors for different leagues of different sports to start applying tests in order to control the use of these substances, like the NFL, which according to the CNN, started testing athletes for steroids in 1987, and many years later, in 2003, the Major League Baseball started doing the same. Soon

after the NFL, the government decided to take a step forward in order to improve this situation.

A year later after the NFL started doing their testings, the Congress of the United States started to create laws to punish the possession of these types of drugs, like the Anti-Drug Abuse Act. The Anti-Drug Abuse act was passed by the Congress in 1988, which makes possession and distribution of anabolic steroids for non-medical purposes a crime (CNN, 2017). This was the first action by the Congress of the United States in order to penalize anyone that is involved with performance-enhancing drugs.

With the creation of laws and the innovation to improve the situation, organizations were established to have a reinforcement on the improvement of this case, like WADA and USADA. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) was founded in 1999 “with the aim of bringing consistency to anti-doping policies and regulations within sports organizations and governments right across the world” (WADA, 2017). The US Anti-Doping Agency was established in the year 2000. The mission of USADA is to preserve the integrity of competition, inspire true sport and protect the rights of athletes (USADA, 2014). Even though USADA an agency working inside the United States while WADA works all around the world, both have the same objective of contributing to the advancement of clean sport and to outreach initiatives focused on the awareness and prevention.

These type of organizations had been responsible for discovering the use of drugs by many athletes which were punished later for the actions. In November of 2015 “a WADA report details evidence of doping in Russian athletics and a ‘deeply rooted culture of cheating at all levels’. Russia is later provisionally suspended as a member of the International Association of Athletics Federations”, and in March of 2016 “at a press conference, tennis player Maria Sharapova admits to failing a drug test at the Australian Open. She is initially suspended for two years, but the ban is later reduced to 15 months” (CNN, 2017). But the use of performance-enhancing drugs has not been only reserved for athletes, as its use has also been considered for the special forces of different countries, like SOCOM.

SOCOM is the abbreviation for the US Special Operations Command. In reports from 2017, SOCOM was “weighing the use of nutritional supplements or even performance-enhancing drugs to push the abilities and endurance of its forces

beyond current human limits” (Woody, 2017). This comes with the objective of helping whoever is on a mission to survive and to overcome the situation.

The use of performance-enhancing drugs has been part of the athletic culture for centuries, and less than a century ago, doping was starting to be recognized as a problem. The use of these drugs will hardly disappear soon but it can be reduced if the organizations do a correct job. But in a case like in SOCOM, the use of performance-enhancing drugs has been a topic of recent relevance, and the people in charge of these the use of these drugs should be responsible enough in order to not make the use of these drugs a problem.

CURRENT SITUATION

Nowadays, this topic remains a serious and difficult issue in sports because besides putting an athlete’s health at risk, the use of performance enhancing drugs are threatening the integrity of clean athletes and the reputation of the sport. Substances and methods are banned because they gain an advantage over others in competition and therefore it is cheating and also because they are fundamentally contrary to the spirit of sport. Furthermore, doping damages competition for clean athletes who play by the rules. Doping directly affects all levels of an athlete, but it could also affect indirectly future generations since they are usually influenced by the actions of professional competitors of their discipline (UK Anti-Doping, 2018).

As a response to doping, governments and organizations around the world have been collaborating together to eradicate this issue. Actually, every representative organization of each sport, like the NFL, the ITF or the FIFA, to mention some of them, count with anti-doping programs that determine if an athlete is competing under the use of any performance-enhancing drug, through the analysis of blood and urine samples from them. Most of them work in accordance with the World Anti-Doping Code, which is “the core document that harmonizes anti-doping policies, rules, and regulations within sports organizations and among public authorities around the world” (WADA, 2018). Since 2004, as mandated by The World Anti-Doping Code, the WADA publishes annually, a list with all the banned substances, in order for athletes to know if they are allowed to consume a certain product. This list, also called the “prohibited list”, has helped to reduce the number of positive anti-doping tests in several disciplines and “identifies the substances and

methods prohibited in- and out-of-competition, and in particular sports. The substances and methods on the List are classified into different categories (e.g., steroids, stimulants, gene doping)” (WADA, 2018).

With the help of this kind of programs, many competitors have been sanctioned, in really important events such as the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, where “4 athletes got positive for the use of substances such as the heart drug trimetazidine or the banned drug meldonium” (Urfan, Belluz, 2018). However, Edmund Willison, a German broadcaster, stated that there may be more since an analysis of tests from “more than 2,000 winter athletes between 2001 and 2010 showed that 46 percent of medal winners in international cross-country ski competitions returned at least one abnormal drug test. Willison revealed that more than 50 of these athletes qualified for the games in South Korea” (Willison, 2018).

But athletes are not the only ones who can have access to this kind of drugs. As it was mentioned before, last year, the United States Special Operations Command considered the use of performance enhancing drugs to improve their development under unfavorable conditions as well as their body when exposed to injuries or pain (Woody, 2017). Another goal of SOCOM on using performance-enhancing drugs is to create what is referred as super soldiers “to expand troops’ ability to operate in places not well suited for humans — high altitudes or underwater in particular” (Woody, 2017). Although nothing has been decided yet, this idea is generating so much controversy among the media because it is true that most of these substances can damage, in the future, the health of the person who consumes them, but it is also true that these drugs can actually help soldiers survive under and improve their performance in tough operations, which basically translates as more successful results and more lives saved.

UN ACTIONS

The increasing use of performance-enhancing drugs has caught the eye of the United Nations, as now the UN, through UNESCO, is actively involved “in the anti-doping fight because of its desire to preserve fair and equitable sport and to protect young people involved in sport” (UNESCO, 2017). Not only professional athletes are getting involved in this, as young athletes and amateur athletes are being drawn into doping. The act of doping not only affects the health of whoever is

using the drugs, but also it affects the morality and the ethics of sports, and that is one of the main reasons why the UN has been progressively trying to be part of the solution.

UNESCO has joined forces with WADA, and are working together in order to combat doping. The United Nations developed “the first truly global anti-doping legal instrument (the International Convention against Doping in Sport) and has, since then, been actively promoting its implementation, by supporting governments in the development of national anti-doping programmes” (UNESCO, 2017). The United Nations has also contributed to the development of anti-doping education and prevention programmes and established in 2008 the Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport, which is made of voluntary financial contributions from the Member States. The involvement of the Member States shows the importance of this topic to the international community.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

As technology and science evolve, new substances are being produced, providing the consumer with even more advantages over the rest of competitors, but at the same time, increasing the risks of getting chronic diseases. Thus, the use of performance enhancing drugs increasingly threatening problem that needs to be regulated for the sake of sports, athletes and possible candidates for the use of this type of substances. For this reason, this committee proposes the following:

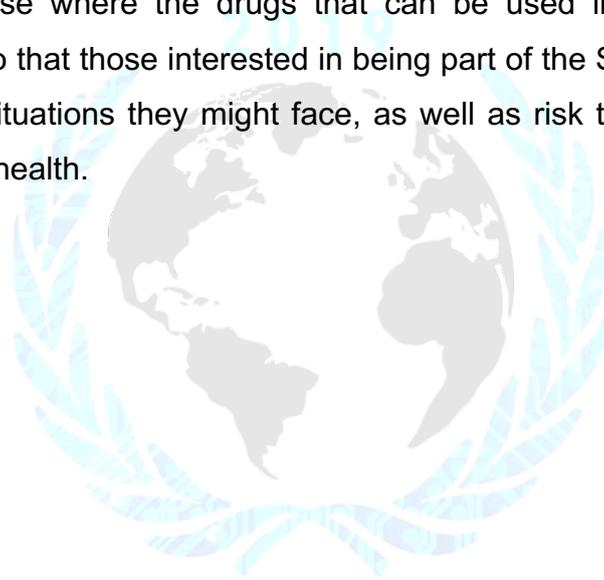
A. In Sports

- Recruit non-sports people for anti-doping positions to avoid corruption within anti-doping and sports organizations, who often let athletes under the use of such substances compete due to interests regarding money (Sports80, 2018).
- Educate children and young athletes from an early age through strategies, campaigns, and programs that involve the national governing bodies, sports clubs, and federations.
- Collaborate with the WADA to enforce stronger punishments and fines for those who tested positive on the anti-doping test.
- Before any important event such as the Olympics or the World Cup, compel competitors to consult the WADA’s updated list of banned substances and

make them aware of the possible punishments for consuming any performance-enhancing drug.

B. In SOCOM

- Evaluate which performance-enhancing drugs harm in less amount the human body in a short and long-term period of time, in order to have a better view on the drugs that can be used under a demanding situation or an unfavorable environment.
- Approve the use of performance-enhancing drugs, only when its use and effects are required to guarantee the survival of the people involved in the operation.
- Create a clause where the drugs that can be used in specific cases are established, so that those interested in being part of the SOCOM are aware of the possible situations they might face, as well as risk that these drugs may cause in their health.



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