



## ***Medical Council of New Zealand***

# **The use of drugs and doping in sport**

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*Any medical practitioner who knowingly prescribes, administers, traffics, supplies or otherwise assists in the use of prohibited substances, for the deliberate purpose of enhancing sports performance and helping a sports person to cheat, may be subject to disciplinary proceedings and may be liable to a charge of medical misconduct.*

### ***Background***

1. Sports and medical organisations, administrators and participants throughout the world predominately support the position that the use of drugs in sport to enhance performance is cheating, dangerous and unacceptable. Sports people found guilty may be fined or banned from participating in their sport.
2. International sporting organisations including the International Olympic Committee and World Anti-doping Agency have adopted three principles, which they believe justify the fight against drug use to enhance sporting performance. They are:
  - i. Protection of the athletes' health,
  - ii. Defence of medical and sports ethics,
  - iii. Provision of an equal chance for all in competition.
3. These organisations also recognise a common list of banned substances, methods and manipulations provided by the International Olympic Committee. Copies of the banned list are available at the IOC Medical Commission website (linked from the IOC website [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org)), or from the New Zealand Sports Drug Agency.<sup>i</sup> The IOC list of doping classes and methods is summarised and adapted for New Zealand in the *New Ethics Catalogue*.

### ***Doping in sport***

4. Any deliberate action that contravenes the International Olympic Committee's principles or infringes on the banned list is considered doping.<sup>ii</sup>
5. New Zealand registered medical practitioners found guilty of prescribing or facilitating this type of drug use face disciplinary action, which may result in removal from the medical register.

### ***Responsibility of Medical Practitioners***

6. The medical practitioner's first responsibility is the health and safety of his or her patient and to treat the presenting condition. If a patient has made the medical practitioner aware of his or her involvement in competitive sports the medical practitioner should advise the patient to ensure any medication prescribed complies with regulations of the sport and is not included on the banned list issued by the IOC.
7. Medical practitioners must be able to resist pressure to prescribe or advise on access to substances for the deliberate use of performance enhancement.

### **Source of drugs**

8. A wide range of substances contributes to physical performance enhancement. These substances are obtainable from medical practitioners, pharmacists and other sources. Sports people should be able to work together with their medical practitioners to protect themselves from the unintentional ingestion of banned substances. The Medical Council recognises the responsibility is shared by the sports person and the medical practitioner consulted.

### **Education**

9. The New Zealand Sports Drug Agency (NZSDA) was established under the NZ Sports Drug Agency Act 1994. NZSDA is the primary agency in NZ, funded by the Government, to encourage drug-free sport. Its functions include the operation of educational programmes on the use of drugs and doping in sports.
10. Medical practitioners should be aware that doping is present in all levels of sport including school level. The Medical Council encourages all medical practitioners to extend their knowledge on doping practices. NZSDA publish a series of information pamphlets on different aspects of doping.

### **The views of other bodies**

11. The Medical Council's statement is consistent with sporting, sports medicine and medical organisations

The Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure "... condemns the use of performance enhancing drugs and doping practices in sport as being contrary to the ethics of sport and potentially harmful to the health of competitors".<sup>iii</sup>

Sports Medicine New Zealand "...confirms its total opposition to all forms of drug abuse in sport", and "...sees the escalation of doping practices as a sad indictment of modern sport, which must be countered by a vigorous educational effort; randomised drug testing; and consistent, appropriate penalties for athletes, coaches and doctors who infringe".

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners "supports the principle of high quality GP care and thus opposes the use of drugs to enhance performance in sport".

12. The Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers Rights states that every consumer has the right to services:
- *that comply with legal, professional, ethical, and other relevant standards (Right 4(2)):*
  - *that are provided in a manner that minimises the potential harm to, and optimises the quality of life of that consumer (Right 4(4)).<sup>iv</sup>*
13. The Medical Council of New Zealand endorses these views.

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<sup>i</sup> NZ Sports Drug Agency, PO Box 18 339, Auckland, ph: 09 521 5706, fax: 09 521 5726, email: NZSDA@NZSDA.co.nz

<sup>ii</sup> International Olympic Committee (1999) **Doping**, page 9.

<sup>iii</sup> Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure (1999) **New Zealand Report to the International Drugs in Sport Summit** (14- 17 November, Sydney, Australia).

<sup>iv</sup> The Code of Health and Disability Services is available from the Health and Disability Commission, PO Box 12-229, Wgtn.