



Prescribing performance enhancing medicines in sport

Any doctor 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 professional misconduct.

Background

1. Sports and medical organisations, administrators and participants throughout the world predominantly support the position that the use of drugs in sport to enhance performance is cheating, dangerous and unacceptable. Sports people found guilty of doping practices are sanctioned, including bans from participating in their sport.
2. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) *World Anti-Doping Code* states that 'Doping is fundamentally contrary to the spirit of sport'.
3. WADA provides a common list of prohibited substances and methods which is updated annually.

Performance enhancing medication in sport

4. Any occurrence of one or more of the anti-doping rule violations laid out in the *World Anti-Doping Code* is considered doping¹.
5. This statement may be used by the Health Practitioner's Disciplinary Tribunal, the Council, and the Health and Disability Commissioner as a standard by which your conduct is measured.

Responsibility of doctors

6. Be especially careful with your prescribing when dealing with athletes. Your first responsibility is the health and safety of your patient and to treat the presenting condition. If a patient has made you aware of his or her involvement in competitive sports then you should take the necessary steps to establish the status of any medication you wish to prescribe with respect to the WADA Prohibited List² and meet any associated requirements (for example Therapeutic Use Exemption applications).

7. You must be able to resist pressure to prescribe or advise on access to substances for the deliberate purpose of performance enhancement.

Source of drugs

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

Education

9. Drug Free Sport New Zealand is an agency established under the Sports Anti-Doping Act 2006. Drug Free Sport New Zealand is funded by the Government to encourage drug-free sport. Its functions include the operation of educational programmes about doping in sports.
10. Doctors should be aware that doping is present in all levels of sport including school level. The Council encourages all doctors to extend their knowledge on doping practices. Drug Free Sport New Zealand publishes information on different aspects of performance enhancing substances and practices.

Related statements

- *Good medical practice*
- *Good prescribing practice*
- *Prescribing drugs of abuse*

April 2010

This statement is scheduled for review by April 2015. Legislative changes may make this statement obsolete before this review date.

¹ Article 1 of the World Anti-Doping Code.

² Copies of the Prohibited List are available at the WADA website (www.wada-ama.org, under the heading "Resources / Resources for Anti-Doping Organizations"). The WADA list of doping classes and methods is summarised and adapted for New Zealand in *MIMS, Indispensable*. Drug Free Sport NZ can also advise you whether a medication prescribed complies with regulations of the relevant sport and is not included on the banned list issued by WADA.