

## Doping in Sport: Attitudes, Beliefs and Knowledge of Talented

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**Abstract :** Objective: The primary aim of this research was to determine the attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of talented young South African athletes regarding prohibited performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) and anti-doping rules and regulations. Methods: This was a survey study and a quantitative research approach was used. South African TuksSport academy athletes at the High Performance Centre, University of Pretoria and competitive high school athletes at four private high schools in Gauteng completed the survey. A self-determined structured questionnaire was used to establish the attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of the athletes. Results: A total of 346 (208 males, 138 females) athletes, age (mean  $\pm$  SD) 16.9  $\pm$  1.41 years participated in the survey. According to this survey, 3.9% of the athletes in this survey admitted to be using a prohibited PED and more than 14% of the athletes said they would consider using a prohibited PED if they knew they would not get caught out. Ambition (46%) and emotional pressure (22.5%) was the primary reasons why the athletes would consider using prohibited PEDs. Even though coaches appear to be the main source of information (PEDs and anti-doping rules), only 42.1% of the athletes felt they were well informed. Conclusion: Controlling doping by means of testing is important. However, it is not sufficient and interventions should include psychosocial programmes planned and developed focusing on changing attitudes towards doping and doping culture, as well as the appropriate education specifically on the health risks of using PEDs.

**Keywords :** doping, anti-doping, attitudes, athletes and sport

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