

ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE IN THE FIELD OF DOPING IN YOUNG ATHLETES OF TEAM GAMES

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Abstract Contemporary sport is becoming more and more commercialized, hence the players strive to win at all costs, and to achieve this goal, they consider all means to be allowed. In order to be constantly on top, competitors change their training methods, use various aids, and finally direct their interests towards doping. Doping is considered to be the use of substances and all means intended to artificially increase physical fitness during sports competitions, which may be harmful to the ethics of sport or cause mental and physical harm to athletes.

The aim of the research is to assess the knowledge of the problem and attitudes of young people practicing sports games towards the dangers of doping. Assessment of knowledge on the effects of the use of illicit means, and analysis of opinion on the use of doping and strengthening mechanisms for the adoption of pharmacological agents.

Research on the knowledge about the use of support measures and doping in sport was carried out among talented youth practicing team sports games in randomly selected clubs of Małopolska, Silesia, Podkarpacie and Opole. Continuation studies were conducted in 2018–2020, they covered 60 girls and 60 boys, aged 16 years. The research was carried out using a questionnaire, the questions of which concerned the following problems: knowledge of the essence of sports doping, the relationship between doping and the principle of fair play in sport, support used in physical recreation, reasons for the use of doping, moral and criminal liability in the use of doping.

When analyzing the results of the research, it should be noted that the use of doping in sport is negatively perceived by the examined youth. However, it can be assumed that the knowledge about the support and the problem of doping in sport is insufficient. Setting the main goal – sports success and the related financial rewards, as well as the willingness to be the best in the opinion of the respondents may narrow the boundaries, which may facilitate the decision to use support and doping. These observations seem to be very disturbing, as the analysis of research data concerns young people practicing sports at the stage of education and the utilitarian nature of physical activity.

Key words doping, youth, sports games, knowledge

Introduction

Playing sports is a way of shaping not only physical, physical and mental fitness, but also shaping positive interpersonal relations. Sport is an ideal means of developing social bonds, a way of creating an integrated society. By its meaning, goals and values, sport transcends the purely bodily dimension and plays an important role in strengthening the health and character of the young generation, giving them the basic tools to meet the challenges of life.

However, despite its values, today's competitive sport slightly changes the beauty of the idea of sport, because in the era of commercialization it becomes a type of activity aimed at extending the limits of fitness and physical endurance of an individual, even at the cost of one's own health. Quite often nowadays, competition, and thus the essence of sport, has become the driving force behind the search for easy paths to success at various levels, especially since victory brings not only satisfaction, but also awards, honors, fame and, most importantly, big money. Hence, the contestants strive to win at all costs, and to achieve this goal, they consider all means permitted. In order not to fall out of the "carousel of sports successes", the players look for various ways out. They change training methods, use various aids, and finally turn their interests towards doping. The word doping was first introduced to sports vocabulary in 1889. It was then used to denote illegal measures used to increase the performance of racehorses. In the same year, the word appeared in the English lexicon as a designation of a mixture of opium and drugs administered to horses during races. From 1935, doping functioned in English as a common term (Yesalis, Bahrke, 2002) Doping is considered to be the use of substances and all means intended to artificially increase physical fitness during sports competitions, which may be harmful to the ethics of sports or harm athletes, both mentally and physically (Rewarski, Nazar, 1995).

Taking into account the disastrous effects of doping on health and sport at work, an attempt was made to test the awareness of this problem among young people, because according to Lipiec (1994), the effectiveness of the fight against doping depends on the one hand on the use of more and more perfect methods of detecting doping agents in the body of athletes, and on the other hand, on the progress in the field of education and prevention from an early age.

Aim of the study and basic assumptions

The aim of the research is to assess the knowledge of the problem and attitudes of young people practicing team sports towards the dangers of doping. Assessment of knowledge about the effects of using illegal substances, and analysis of opinions on the use of doping and the mechanisms of taking fortifying drugs.

Research questions were asked in the work:

1. Do young people practicing sports have optimal knowledge about the use of support measures?
2. Is there any awareness of the dangers of doping among young people?

Research hypothesis

Due to the nature of practicing sports, young people have a negative attitude towards the threat posed by the use of prohibited support measures.

Material and research methods

Research on the knowledge about the use of support measures and doping in sport was carried out among talented youth practicing team sports games in randomly selected clubs of Małopolska, Silesia, Podkarpacie and Opole. Continuation studies were conducted in 2018–2020, they covered 60 girls and 60 boys, aged 16 years. The research was carried out using a questionnaire, the questions of which concerned the following problems: knowledge of the essence of sports doping, the relationship between doping and the principle of fair play in sport, support used in physical recreation, reasons for the use of doping, moral and criminal liability in the use of doping. The validation of the survey carried out by experts in the field of sport ethics in terms of accuracy was $tt = 0.96$, and the reliability in the mock test was $tr = 0.99$ (Hermer, 1985; Brzeziński, 1996).

Presentation and discussion of research results

When discussing the research results, the first step was to analyze the knowledge of the essence of doping in sport. Attempts were made to assume that the knowledge of the problem that was discussed in the research is the starting point for this issue. According to the compiled data, both girls and boys have an advantage in the full knowledge of this problem. However, a large percentage of incorrect answers can be noticed (Table 1).

Table 1. Knowledge of the definition and essence of doping in sport

Type of response	Girls	The boys
	n = 60	n = 60
Correct	31 = 51.6%	34 = 56.6%
Incorrect	29 = 48.4%	26 = 43.4%

It seems that the problem of doping in sport should be presented more precisely among young people. In the era of support and treatment with pharmacological agents, there is a fluid limit in the selection of strengthening agents and drugs that may have a doping effect (example: Kuzniecowa, Maradona, Armstrong) – sport.tvp.pl.

The presentation of further research results concerns the non-compliance of doping with the principle of fair play (Table 2). and opinion polls on the admissibility of doping in sport (Table 3).

Table 2. Opinion research: is the use of doping consistent with the principle of fair play in sport?

Type of response	Girls	The boys
	n = 60	n = 60
Yes	0 = 0%	1 = 1.6%
No	58 = 96.6%	55 = 91.7%
I don't know	2 = 3.4%	4 = 6.7%

Table 3. Opinion on: Should doping in sport be allowed?

Type of response	Girls	The boys
	n = 60	n = 60
Definitely not	54 = 94%	52 = 86.7
Definitely yes	0 = 0%	0 = 0%
Depending on the situation	4 = 6.7%	8 = 13.3%
I have no opinion	2 = 3.3%	0 = 0%

It should be noted that over 90% of the respondents indicate the correct direction in their opinion on these issues. It is a good prognostic of the opinion of the respondents on these issues, nevertheless almost 10% of the respondents show a different opinion or a lack of decisiveness on the topic that seems so obvious.

The opinion on the problem of penalties for doping in sport is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Opinion on: How to punish doping in sport?

Type of response	Girls	The boys
	n = 60	n = 60
Only a financial penalty	1 = 1.6%	3 = 5%
Only the suspension of the rights of the player for a specified period	12 = 20%	15 = 25%
The suspension of the competitor's rights and a financial penalty	24 = 40%	27 = 45%
Lifetime disqualification	22 = 36.7%	13 = 21.7%
I have no opinion	1 = 1.7%	2 = 3.3%

The results of the research illustrate quite diverse penal sanctions that would be imposed by both girls and boys. It seems that these opinions may illustrate an extended boundary of responsibility, which is not a good prognosis for the future attitude of the surveyed youth in the issue of doping in sport.

Table 5 presents the opinion of the surveyed youth on the harmfulness of doping in sport.

Table 5. Does doping harm your health?

Type of response	Girls	The boys
	n = 60	n = 60
Probably yes	4 = 6.6%	5 = 8.3%
Yes	53 = 88.4%	45 = 75%
Probably not	3 = 5 %	8 = 13.4%
No	0 = 0.0%	2 = 3.3%

Research data show that girls, more than boys, have a precise opinion about the harmfulness of doping to health. This condition may be due to the fact that boys may play down the dangers of doping to a greater extent, or that they have such a high health indicator at the moment that they do not feel such a threat.

Important information in the field of knowledge about the importance of support on sports results is provided by the studies in Table 6.

Table 6. Does the sports result depend to a large extent on support – doping?

Type of response	Girls	The boys
	n = 60	n = 60
Yes	39 = 65%	47 = 78.4%
No	18 = 30%	12 = 20%
I do not know	3 = 5%	1 = 1.6%

These data clearly show that both girls, and especially boys, have a specific opinion on the importance of supporting in achieving a high sports result. It seems that such a phenomenon is disturbing, as it may narrow the line in the mild perception of the problem of sports doping.

When looking for a tendency to change their image – physical fitness, an attempt was made to find out whether the subjects could be open to using any support.

Table 7. Do you feel a great desire to change the image of your physical fitness?

Type of response	Girls	The boys
	n = 60	n = 60
Yes	30 = 50%	41 = 68.4%
No	28 = 46.7%	18 = 30%
I do not know	2 = 3.3%	1 = 1.6%

The data in Table 7 show a high percentage of disturbed self-esteem process in terms of physical fitness of the examined girls and boys. Therefore, taking into account the high rank for support in achieving a sports result (Table 6), it can be assumed that most of the respondents could use support to improve their physical fitness. Such a phenomenon may be disturbing, and the reason for such an attitude can be seen in the high dynamics and commercialization of social life, which requires striving for excellence, sometimes at any cost (an example of the widespread use of amphetamines among young people learning).

The data in Table 8 in the aspect of a possible decision to accept doping presents us with a very diverse position. Although the analysis of the data shows that in both girls and boys, opinions negating this precedent prevail, some respondents show some tendency to use unauthorized support (girls approx. 11.7% – boys approx. 24.9%).

Table 8. Would you decide to take illegal support measures to achieve high sports success?

Type of response	Girls	The boys
	n = 60	n = 60
Definitely yes	2 = 3.3%	4 = 6.6%
Yes – if it was certain that they would not be detected	5 = 8.4%	11 = 18.3%
No	43 = 71.7%	37 = 61.8%
I have no opinion	10 = 16.6%	8 = 13.3%

On the other hand, Table 9 presents the position of the respondents in a specific situation of choosing a decision to use doping.

Table 9. Reason why you could take illegal support measures?

Type of response	Girls	The boys
	n = 60	n = 60
Only to achieve a high sports result	17 = 28.4%	15 = 25%
For high sports results and financial benefits	38 = 63.3%	44 = 73.3%
I have no opinion	5 = 8.3%	1 = 1.6%

Presented in Table 9, the questions refer to the studies in Table 6–8 and indicate the disturbing position of young athletes to the possible adoption of doping depending on complex circumstances. The content of the data shows that the desire to achieve a high result, sports success and thus financial benefits could change their position in the approval of the use of sports doping.

Discussion

When discussing the presented research results, it should be noted that the use of doping in sport is generally negatively perceived by the examined youth. However, knowledge about the support and the problem of doping in sport is unstable and insufficient. These results are also confirmed by the research conducted by Duda (2005).

Setting the main goal – sports success and the related financial rewards, as well as the willingness to be the best in the opinion of the respondents may narrow the boundaries, which may facilitate the decision to use support and doping. These observations seem to be very disturbing in sports education, as the analysis of research data concerns young people practicing sports at the stage of education and the utilitarian nature of physical activity.

This stage is very significant in the development of a young athlete, because due to the great disinterestedness (the autotelic nature of the action prevails) – Naglak (2005), Duda (2012), he/she should develop a disinterested and ethical attitude in sports competition. However, an analysis of selective studies points to a different trend. So one can wonder about the cause of this phenomenon. It seems that in modern sport, even in the initial stages of training, considerable commercialization can be noticed (Paluszek, 2010), instrumental goals are becoming more and more dominant (valuable rewards, domination and too high expectations of parents in the process of training children), which distort the healthy and objective competition. Young athletes want to win at all costs, thus disturbing their self-esteem, which lowers the norms of values in sports competition (Duda, Wisłocki, 2013). At this point, you should consider what else is causing it. It seems that high tolerance to the use of doping results from the high popularity of doping already in recreational activity. This is called mild doping used in gyms and fitness clubs to improve psychophysical condition (Wichstrom, Pedersen, 2001; Rachon, Pokrywka, Suchecka-Rachon, 2006). Also, from the psychological point of view, this aspect is related to a specific well-being, which, if misunderstood, may allow for self-satisfaction, which alleviates the responsibility of doping (Seligman, Steen, Paarks, 2004). It also seems that modern doping, through the use of hardly detectable adjuvants (Barroso, Mazzoni, Rabin, 2008), may also encourage the use of this type of drugs. Another reason for such a state of affairs may lie in the danger of explaining the unethical attitudes of “sports champions” – the example of “God’s hand” performed by the Argentine footballer Maradona (Liś, Olszański, 2014), or tolerance in anti-doping tests for American basketball players of the “Dream Team” at the Olympics in Barcelona in 1992 (Lipoński, 1996). It seems that such cases, mainly related to the commercialization of sport, can to a large extent “mitigate” the negative phenomenon of sports doping, which in its

form, despite the large social disapproval, is still a problem for fair play sports competition. At the end, the author would like to point out that the aim of the study was to selectively identify knowledge in the field of doping, its health hazards and the attitude itself towards the possibility of its application among young people practicing sports. The analysis of data and previous research in this aspect (Duda, 2005) shows that the topic related to the risk of doping among adolescents is still relevant and indicates a tendency to look at this problem gently. According to the authors, this phenomenon is significant not only in ethical sports education, but can significantly affect the pro-health dimension of sport, rationalization of training and future attitude in competition in line with the Olympic spirit.

Conclusions

1. There is an insufficient level of knowledge of doping in sport among the examined youth.
2. Increasing the requirements, the rush for perfection narrows the boundaries of the mental attitude towards the problem of doping in sport.

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