

Elite athletes believe drugs improve performance: Study

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A majority of elite athletes use drugs to achieve athletic success, improve performance or alternatively for financial gain, a new research has revealed.

The study by researchers at the Department of Physical and Sports Education at the University of Granada shows that athletes widely believe that the fight against doping is 'insufficient and biased' and the sanctions are 'not severe enough.'

The athletes consider doping substances as 'effective' in improving performance, despite understanding that they constitute cheating, pose health risks and entail sanctions.

Researchers Mikel Zabala and Jaime Morente-Sanchez have analysed the attitudes, beliefs and knowledge about doping of elite athletes from all over the world and intend to act against doping by developing specific, efficient anti-doping strategies.

The study reveals that athletes participating in team-based sports appear to be less susceptible to using doping substances and coaches are the chief influence and source of information for athletes when they begin to take banned substances, while doctors and other specialists are less involved.

Researchers also believe that lack of complete information should be remedied through appropriate educational programmes as many players are unaware of the problems entailed in using banned substances and methods.

Some elite athletes also do not have much information about dietary supplements and the secondary effects of performance-enhancing substances.

Zabala and Morente-Sanchez have said that prevention campaigns are essential to influence athletes' attitudes towards doping and the culture surrounding this banned practice.