ATTITUDES TOWARD DOPING AMONG POLISH ATHLETES MEASURED WITH THE POLISH VERSION OF PETROCZI’S PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT ATTITUDE SCALE

KRZYSZTOF SAS-NOWOSIELSKI¹, ALEKSANDRA BUDZISZ²

¹Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Faculty of Physical Education, Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Katowice, Poland
²Doctoral Studies, Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Faculty of Physical Education, Katowice, Poland

Abstract

Introduction. The aim of the study was twofold. The first aim was to specify attitudes toward using performance-enhancing drugs (doping) among athletes practising different sports disciplines. The second aim was to present the Polish version and validation of the Performance Enhancement Attitude Scale (PEAS). Material and methods. A total of 340 athletes (173 males and 167 females) took part in the study. They represented 13 sport disciplines. The study was conducted in Central Sports Centres in Poland. Athletes’ attitudes were assessed using the Performance Enhancement Attitude Scale (PEAS). Results. The study revealed that athletes generally were not tolerant in relation to illegal performance-enhancing substances in sport. However, men were more permissive toward illegal performance enhancement than women. The other important factor, apart from gender, was the amount of contact between competitors. The lowest values were found for sports where athletes competed parallel to each other, medium values were recorded for sports where athletes were in close contact, and the highest values were found in the group of athletes having no contact with the competitors. Our analyses also confirmed that the 11-item version of PEAS has the best fit indices and therefore is most recommended for use among Polish athletes. Conclusions. The Polish version of PEAS is recommended in its 11-item version, and its reliability was confirmed. According to the findings of the study, Polish athletes rather do not approve of doping behaviours. Men were more likely to use illegal substances than women. The most positive attitude towards doping was found for sport disciplines where there is no contact with the competitor.

Keywords: sport, doping, athletes, PEAS

Introduction

According to the World Anti-Doping Code, “doping is fundamentally contrary to the spirit of sport” [1]. However, this phenomenon is widespread in high-performance sport, as was disclosed in a recent 2015 report of the CIRC on cycling or the 2016 WADA report on Russian sport. Moreover, it is also present in youth sport and even amateur sport. Efforts aimed at countering doping practices are based on two kinds of activities, one type being mainly reactive (controlling athletes and sanctioning those who have violated anti-doping rules) and the other rather proactive, namely anti-doping education. Within the latter, understanding the attitudes of athletes toward doping is an important goal which can contribute to initiatives developing attitudes that can predispose individuals to anti-doping behaviours. Attitudes in general, and attitudes toward specific issues in particular, are operationalised differently, and therefore various measures are used in studies dealing with the problem of doping attitudes in athletes. One of the measures that has gained international recognition [2, 3, 4, 5] is the Performance Enhancement Attitude Scale (PEAS) [6], which, in the original version, is a 17-item six-point Likert-type scale assessing the tolerance of athletes toward doping use in sport (the higher the score on PEAS, the more permissive the attitude to doping).

According to Morente-Sánchez, Femia-Marzo, and Zabala [3], the scale should be tested in various cultural contexts and languages, and “the adaptation and psychometric validation of this scale to other widely spoken languages is an important issue to facilitate cross-cultural comparisons”.

Therefore, the purpose of the study was to assess attitudes toward doping in Polish athletes with a Polish version of PEAS.

Material and methods

Participants of the study were 340 athletes (173 males and 167 females) aged 18.20 ± 3.93 years, practising 13 sports disciplines: athletics (track, throwing, and jumping events), track cycling, canoeing, field hockey, volleyball, squash, fencing, judo, rowing, powerlifting, weightlifting, speed skating, and archery. The length of the athletes’ training experience was 5.96 ± 3.34 years. The data were collected in the Central Sports Centres in Zakopane, Walcz, Szczyrk, and Spala from November to December 2016. Every fourth (26.47%) respondent was a member of the national team in their sport. As far as the level of their sport performance is concerned, they had the following classes: 35 (10.29%) had the international championship class, 76 (22.35%) had the championship class, 65 (19.12%) had the first...