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ACCESSIBILITY OF ATHLETES TO PROHIBITED DOPING SUBSTANCES IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the accessibility of sportsmen to prohibited doping substances in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It focused on how sportspersons obtained the performance-enhancing substances used before, during and after sports contests. A total of 320 athletes sampled from three tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Ekiti State Sports Council, The Nigerian Prison Service (sports section), Ekiti State and the Nigerian Police (sports section) using purposive, simple and stratified random sampling techniques. A descriptive research design i.e. survey type was used. Data were collected with a-self-designed questionnaire and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and Chi-square statistics. Findings revealed that athletes obtained doping substances through the market places (black market), coaches and co-athletes. It is recommended that, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control (NAFDAC) and National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), in collaboration with the sport governing bodies or authorities in Ekiti State should embark on thorough in-house checking of market places and consumers' products to curtail the availability of doping substances to the athletes.
***Keywords**: Accessibility, doping substances, psychoactive substances, ergogenic substances, athletes.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Sports goes beyond a measure of athletic excellence and the winning of trophies and medals. Sport is an integral thread in the fabric of society and enriches our daily life. Sports also teaches us about honesty, commitment, fair play and ethics. In all walks of life, true sports winners through theor talent, skill, training and motivation rise to all challenges through sports. However, winning at-all-cost syndrome that undermines the integrity of sports has entered the sports arena. The accessibility of sportspersons to doping substances for the purpose of gaining an unfair competitive edge over their opponents presents a false impression of actual performance of athletes at all levels. This act is unfair, criminal, and unethical and places the future of sport at stake, as dangerous and sometimes as deadly game of doping. Sportspersons who are still in their useful days, reported less difficulty in having access to doping substances as they obtain them because gifts from friends (Riceeb, 2008; International Olympic Committee, 2009).

It is not just athletes who are involved in doping practices, many have also held athletes' support personnel, who are constantly faced with the need for good performance accountable. They are responsible for the provision of doping substances, especially when coaches and sports trainers are more rewarded financially, and the enlistment of their working status tied to excellent performance or winning of medals at all cost (Timothy, 2001;World Health Organization, 1999; 2002). For instance, The Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) (1998) and Raplan

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(2001) accused some sports handlers of encouraging athletes' involvement in substance use and abuse especially the performance-enhancing substances.

Similarly, athletes may obtain doping substances from coaches, trainers and sports physicians who may go as far as suggesting the use of doping substances in order to be seen as top sports handlers and trainers, and to retain their jobs (Council of Europe, 2002; Adegboyega, 2003). For instance, it was reported in the Nigerian Tribune, (17th August, 2008) and the Nation, (12th August, 2008) that Athletics coach, Trevor Graham and Manfred Edwald (the Head of East Germany Sports Federation) were banned from coaching or participating in competition or sporting activities organized by the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) and other world sport authorities because of their deep involvement in doping scandal.

Other sources of procurement of doping substances by athletes may include market places (black markets) retail outlets/supermarkets, other athletics officials, gymnasium pharmacists, chemist and motor vehicle parks and without age restriction. It is therefore, asserted that majority of sportsmen who use doping substances have always obtained them from the underground agents. It has been observed that despite strict measures against the procurement of doping substances by sportsmen and women, doping substances are still made available for the athletes' consumption before, during and after sports contests. This illegal and unethical practice is against the principle of fair play, thus creating uneven playing field for the athletes. However, the magnitude of this problem is not quite known among sportsmen and women in Ekiti State. This study therefore investigated the sources of accessibility of athletes to doping substances in Ekiti State. Moreover, the study examined whether there is any significant difference in the accessibility of sportsmen and women to doping substances. It is believed that, this study would provide data on accessibility of doping substances to the athletes and guidelines towards their curtailment.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1 Participants

A total of 320 (160 males and 160 females) athletes were sampled from three tertiary institutions, Ekiti State Sports Council, Nigerian Police Force (Sports section), and the Nigerian Prison Services (Sports section) in Ekiti State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 80 participants (40 males and females) in each of the four locations used for the study.

2.2 Tools of the Study

The Questionnaire of 'Accessibility of Sportsmen and Women to Doping Substances Questionnaire (ASWDSQ)' was used to collect information for the study. The instrument consists 2 sections A and B. Section A sought information on background characteristics of the participants such as age, sex, place of work, occupation and educational institutions attended. Section B of the questionnaire contained items on various sources of provision of performance-enhancing substances used by the athletes. The participants were asked to indicate the doping substances used for sports contests. Experts' judgments were used to ascertain the face and content validities of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was pilot tested with a sample of 50 participants selected outside the actual sample used for the study. A Reliability Coefficient of 0.81 was obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics.

2.3 Data Collection

The data were collected from the participants in their sports training venues during their sports training programme. The services of research assistants were employed for data collection. The

320 copies of the questionnaire were collected back and duly completed, thus making a 100% return rate.

2.4 Statistical Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and Chi-square statistics by using SPSS software.

3. RESULTS

Table 1: Accessibility of sportsmen and women to doping substances

Sources of accessibility of doping substances	*Male*		*Female*		*Total*	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
Other Athletes	18	11.3	10	6.3	28	8.7
The Coaches	82	51.3	33	20.6	115	35.95
Market Places	22	13.8	103	64.4	125	39.06
The Team Physicians	14	8.8	3	1.9	17	5.31
The Chemists	15	9.4	4	2.5	19	5.94
Mobile Drug Agents	3	1.9	2	1.3	5	1.56
Motor Vehicles Parks	4	2.5	3	1.9	7	2.19
Other Teams Officials	2	1.3	2	1.3	4	1.25

Table 1 reveals that a total of 82 (51.3%) male and 33 (20.6%) female participants indicated the coaches as the major source of procuring doping substances, while 22 (13.8%) male and 103 (64.4%) female participants reveal the market place as the source of obtaining performances-enhancing substances. Other sources from where doping substances could be procured as indicated were co-athletes with 18 (11.3%) male and 10 (6.3%) female participants; the chemists with 15 (9.4%) males and 4 (2.5%) female participants. Similarly, the respondent indicated that those responsible for providing them with doping substances team physicians were 14 (8.8%) male and 3 (1.9%) female participants respectively. Only 2 (1.3%) male and female participants indicated other team officials as the sources of provision of performance-enhancing substances. Moreover, the data showed that the major sources from where sportsmen and women obtain doping substances were the market places, the coaches and co-athletes.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis showing difference in the accessibility of sportsmen and women to doping substances

Source of accessibility	*Male*	*Female*	*df*	*X^2-cal*	*X^2-tab*	*R*
Other athlete	18	10				
The coaches	82	33				
Market places	22	103				
The team physicians	14	3	7	89.46	14.09	S
The chemist	15	4				
Mobile drug agent	3	2				
Motor vehicle part	4	3				
Other team physicians	2	2				

$p<0.05$ level of significance

Table 2 reveals that chi-square calculated value of 89.46 was greater than the chi-square table value of 14.07 at df=7 and $p<0.05$ level of significance. The chi-square analysis on the data showed a significant difference in the sources of accessibility of sport men and women to doping

substances. The market place coaches and co-athletes were the sources more frequently used than other sources.

4. DISCUSSION

One major finding of this study was the identification of where the respondents obtained the doping substances used. Similarly, there was a significant difference in the source of accessibility of sportsmen and women to doping substances used. Prominent among the sources of provision of doping substances used by the male athletes was the coaches (51.3%) followed by market places (64.4%) in the favour of the female athletes. Similarly co-athletes (11.3% male and female participants respectively) were other sources from where athletes obtained doping substances they used. This finding is consistent with that of Anumoye (1980), Ebie and Pela (1982), Nevadomsky (1982), Woolley (2000). NDLEA, (1998), Council of Europe (2002) and Davis (2009) claimed that those youths who were athletes obtained doping substances from coaches, market places especially black markets, fellow athletes, physician and pharmacists or chemists.

Further explanation of this finding is that, sportsmen interact more freely with their coaches and teammates than their female counterpart, while females (athletes) are more frequent in the market places for commercial purpose than their male counterparts without age restriction in Ekiti State of Nigeria. This provides them various opportunities to interact with performance-enhancing substances. Most of the sport handlers were fond of suggesting the use of performance enhancing substances to athletes in order to be adjudged top handlers (Woolley, 2000). Similarly, this study is also consistent with the findings of Chado (1989), NDLEA, (1998), WHO (1999; 2000), Adegboyega (2003), Peter, 2009 and Ojeikere (2009) that athletes worldwide may not be totally free from performance enhancing substances used in sports, because of their exposure to many sources of their procurement of such drugs through national and international sports contests.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed the accessibility channel of sportspersons to doping substances and the consequences on them when used. Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that:

- The NAFDAC and NDLEA in collaboration with Ekiti State government, the various sports governing bodies should embark on in-house checking to curtail availability of doping substance in the market place available to the athletes.
- Coaches and other sports handlers should be exposed to effective and comprehensive continuous drug education program during their sport training programs.
- A comprehensive drug education program specifying the consequences of doping should be integrated to the sports training programs for the athlete, thus discouraging them from seeking various avenues to obtain doping substances.

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