

PDHPE

Justify the reasons drugs are considered to be unethical and carry a range of risks for the athlete.

Drugs, notably those that are performance enhancing are considered to be unethical by most international sports organizations as well as the International Olympic Committee. The reasons primarily centre around the health risks imposed on an athlete and the equality of opportunity providing a competitive advantage to athletes who choose to take such substances.

There are major short-term and long-term health risks associated with athletes engaging with performance enhancing drugs. Over 800 elite athletes were surveyed by an Australian Sports Drug Agency, with 49% reporting they felt pressured to use drugs due to the incentive of financial rewards as a result of their sporting performance. This reveals that nearly 400 out of 800 athletes were willing to risk their health and act in an unethical manner to possibly gain fame and fortune. Despite performance enhancing drugs such as peptide hormones, particularly EPO enhancing an athlete's ability in long-distance endurance events such as triathlons the side effects and consequences can be debilitating and life threatening. Short-term effects such as nausea and increased sweating can quickly escalate into long-term effects such as thickening of the blood causing blood clots and consequently death as seen in the case of the Belgian cyclist Johan Sermon who died of a heart attack in 2004. Furthermore due to new drugs constantly being manufactured and trialed it is almost impossible to know the long-term health effects until studies have been conducted therefore exemplifying that due to the health risks associated with performance enhancing drugs, drugs are considered to be unethical and carry a range of risks for an athlete.

Additionally drugs in sport are considered to be unethical due to the unfair advantage gained by substance abusers over athletes who choose to remain 'clean' in other words free from prohibited substances. Advantages of performance enhancing drugs, such as beta-blockers are notably a reduced heart rate essentially inhibiting adrenalin production allowing for greater relaxation and concentration. This in particular benefits athletes participating in events such as shooting where trembling needs to be avoided to keep ones hands steady. Kim Jong-su a North Korean sport shooter tested positive to the banned substance propranolol, a beta-blocker during the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing and was subsequently stripped of his silver and bronze medals. Jong-su is essentially gaining a competitive advantage over other competitors by violating the rules of conduct thus acting in an unethical manner. This example essentially proves the performing enhancing effects of such substances and reveals the unethical advantages substance abusers gain over those who choose to not engage in such activities.

Taking performance-enhancing drugs is not abiding by the World Anti-Doping Code 'To protect the athletes' fundamental right to participate in doping-free sport and thus promote health, fairness and equality for athletes worldwide'. This illustrates that performance-enhancing drugs are violating rules and is ultimately a form of cheating perhaps to gain status and wealth. The unethical practice is further heightened by those who use masking agents such as diuretics to hide the presence of a banned substance in their urine or blood sample allowing them to cover up their use of drugs and gain a competitive advantage over other participants. Such an unethical practices is demonstrated through the case of Michigan University swimmer Emily Brunemann, who in 2009 who was consequently suspended for six months by the United States Anti-Doping association after testing positive for two masking agents listed on the World Antii-doping Agency Prohibited list. Performing enhancing drugs as a form of cheating fundamentally makes sports less of a 'genetic lottery' and the winners are those who can effectively combine genetic potential, training and psychology with performance enhancing drugs rather those that are genetically gifted and train to their maximum potential. These types of drugs are not taken to 'level the playing field' but gain an advantage over other athletes who abide by the rules. It is therefore evident that taking performance-enhancing drugs is violating the codes of sport and taking away the pureness of such activities and instead being replaced with a false indication of human ability.

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Drugs in sport are also considered to be unethical due to the effects on sponsors, spectators as well as children and teenagers. Sponsors of elite athletes who are found to be taking prohibited substances may find their business or individual reputation significantly reduced often resulting in a loss in profit and growth. Furthermore sports tarnished with drug scandals will not attract further sponsorship if drug doping is involved or suspected consequently affecting the experience of spectators if sporting associations can no longer afford to maintain their clubs particularly their reputation as seen in the case of NRL team the Newcastle Knights where in 2010 major sponsors Energy Australia and NIB were considering ending deals supposedly worth \$800 000 as a result of Chris Houston being the second player after Danny Wicks to face drug related charges. Also unethical is the affects drug doping can have on teenagers and children who often have role models they wish to be like and follow. When an elite athlete admits to using performance enhancing drugs or produces a positive test it often establishes a negative message in the minds of young people thus another reason why drug use is considered unethical.

The impacts of drugs, particularly those that are performance enhancing are essentially proven to be unethical due to the range of health risks they carry for an athlete, the impact they have on society notably spectators, sponsors and young adults as well as unfair advantage gained by substance abusers as opposed to those who are 'clean'. Therefore it is evident that these issues pose dishonest and immoral practices greatly affecting sports today.