

conference abstract

observational

people

Men ignore serious health risks of steroid abuse in pursuit of the body beautiful

Many men continue to abuse steroids despite knowing that they have serious, life-limiting and potentially lethal side effects, according to findings to be presented in Lyon, at the [European Society of Endocrinology](#) annual meeting, [ECE 2019](#). The study findings indicate that men using anabolic steroids to improve strength and physical performance are often aware of the side effects but choose to continue taking them. This raises serious concerns not only for their own health but that of future generations, since side effects are known to damage sperm as well as increase the risk of sexual dysfunction, heart disease and liver damage.

Anabolic steroids such as testosterone are performance-enhancing hormones that increase muscle mass and boost athletic ability, which has led to their misuse and abuse by some, and men in particular. However, the use of steroids has some life-limiting and serious side effects including reduced sperm count, erectile dysfunction, baldness, breast development and an increased risk of heart disease, stroke and liver or kidney failure. Despite this steroid misuse persists, a 2014 study estimated that worldwide 3.3% of the population or 6.4% of the male population are abusing steroids. Recent evidence has suggested that not only do steroids pose serious health risks to the individual but that they also cause damage to sperm, so could be harmful to their future children. To adequately tackle this health issue, it is necessary to establish whether men abusing steroids are fully aware of all the risks or if they are choosing to ignore them.

In this study, Dr Mykola Lykhonosov and colleagues from Pavlov First Saint Petersburg State Medical University in Russia, conducted an anonymous survey of men, who regularly attend the gym, to assess their knowledge of, use of and attitude towards the health risks of anabolic steroids. Of 550 respondents 30.4% said they used steroids, 74.3% of users were aged 22-35 years old and 70.2% of users said they were aware of the side effects. In addition, 54.8% of all respondents indicated that they would like to receive more expert information on steroids and their side effects.

Dr Lykhonosov says, "These findings were surprising, not only was the prevalence of steroid abuse high, knowledge of the damaging side effects was also high, yet this does not stop them taking them."

Dr Lykhonosov's now plans to investigate how to treat hormonal imbalances and disorders caused by steroid abuse. He also thinks that greater public awareness of steroid abuse and its health risks may help discourage users.

Dr Lykhonosov comments, "We need to tackle this growing public health problem, increasing awareness through the promotion of stories from former users, on how steroid abuse has negatively impacted on their health and lives, could be a good strong message to discourage abuse."

Abstract

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The awareness of the side effects of the use of AAS as a factor of the conscious rejection of their use. The price of a beautiful body

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Background: The motivation for the use of AAS by men engaged in recreational activities is the improvement of body composition and strength indicators. A deterrent to the use of AAS can be awareness of the side effects of their use, in particular the development of secondary hypogonadism.

Aim: To study the awareness of AAS users about the negative impact of this class of drugs on the body.

Methods: An individual anonymous correspondence questionnaire was conducted for men in gym. We studied information about the use of AAS, the attitude to use of AAS, awareness of the side effects of their use, patterns and duration of their use, the desire of respondents to obtain reliable information about steroids and their effects on health.

Results: 762 questionnaires were provided for the assessment. 550 questionnaires were met the criteria. AAS was used by 30.4% of respondents (n=167). The main consumers of AAS were men aged 22 to 35 years old - 74.3%. The most common drugs were Testosterone propionate (51.5%). The most common dosage of injectable testosterone was 1000 mg per week (23.9%). The use of AAS over 9 months was indicated by 11% (n=19) of men. The main source of information on AAS was indicated by the Internet (48.7%). A negative attitude towards AAS was formed by 17.3% of respondents. 69.3% (n=381) of respondents gave a positive answer to the question about awareness about AAS, 30.7% - negative (n=169). Almost all respondents using AAS indicated that they have information on AAS - 96.4% (n=161). In the group of non-AAS users, the majority of respondents are informed about AAS - 57.4% (n=220), 42.6% (n=163) are not informed. Among all respondents to a clarifying question about awareness of side effects and complications of using AAS, an affirmative answer was 73.8% (n=406), negative - 26.2% (n=144). AAS users are more aware of AAS ($\chi^2=82.954$, $p<0.001$) and their side effects ($\chi^2=70.207$, $p<0.001$) compared to non-users. 22% (n=121) of the respondents were not informed with the side effects of steroids. 54.8% respondents expressed desire to receive qualified information about the AAS.

Conclusion: The survey data indicates a high awareness of the side effects of using AAS, which, surprisingly, does not lead to the conscious abandonment of their use by people engaged in recreational activity. However, a significant percentage of those wishing to receive qualified information about the dangers of steroids gives hope that the information can still become the main tool in limiting the use of doping drugs.

Notes for Editors

1. The poster “*The awareness of the side effects of the use of AAS as a factor of the conscious rejection of their use. The price of a beautiful body*” was presented on Sunday 19 May 2019, at the European Congress of Endocrinology at the Lyon Convention Centre, Lyon, France.
2. The European Congress of Endocrinology is being held at Lyon Convention Centre, Lyon, France on the 18-21 May 2019. See the [full scientific programme](#).
3. The [European Society of Endocrinology](#) was created to promote research, education and clinical practice in endocrinology by the organisation of conferences, training courses and publications, by raising public awareness, liaison with national and international legislators, and by any other appropriate means.