

**Topic: Athletic enhancement through drug and genetic technologies.**

With the Olympic games at the forefront of athletic events right now, one can only wonder how far athletes are willing to go to attain their ultimate potential. There exists strict drug-prevention policies in most collegiate and professional sports organizations created to help uphold the integrity of the sport and protect the health of the athletes. But soon gene therapies will offer never before seen athletic possibilities.

**Most Relevant facts**

- Different types of enhancement therapies
- Common side effects of steroid use
- Possible enhancement procedures on the horizon

**Professional Issues**

- Professional athletes are allowed to risk their lives, over train, and focus all efforts on becoming the best, so they have an invested interest in any method of enhancement.
- Enhancement procedures and drugs are so expensive that there would be an economic division among competing athletes.

**Legal Issues**

- There are existing laws preventing many enhancement drugs from being sold (creating a huge black market)
- Politicians have the duty to protect the sanctity of human life, and must therefore at least acknowledge the conflict of interests in allowing drug use and genetic manipulation.
- Enforcing international legislation on drug use and genetic manipulation can prove to be nearly impossible.

**Ethical Issues**

- Supporting harmful and dangerous methods of athletic enhancement.
- Preventing athletes from assuming the risks in order to gain substantial benefits while allowing and even promoting harsh physical sacrifices that could prove to be even more physically and mentally devastating.
- The protection of the human spirit; should people be allowed to manipulate their physiological and genetic makeup to become superhuman?
- Enforcing equal opportunities for all athletes.
- Ramifications on children/society

**Stakeholders**

- Athletes willing to take drugs and undergo procedures
- Competing athletes unwilling or unable to take drugs/genetic treatments
- Sports organizations
- Parents and individuals looking to protect the interests of future generations

**Possible Actions**

Allow controlled and approved methods of enhancement to be incorporated into the training programs of athletes.

**-Consequences**

There would be a huge leap in athletic achievements, but competitors could still remain on the same level (records would be broken, but individual advantages over competition would be insignificant if all athletes had access to the same methods/treatments)

A precedence of drug use and genetic manipulation would be set that could lead to a slippery slope. It would be difficult to prevent abuse!

Younger athletes would be more prone to attempt seemingly condonable drug use.

#### **-Individual rights/fairness**

Athletes are given the right to train as hard and long as they like, so they should have the right to take advantage of techniques that could help them attain safe goals.

Athletes who follow the rules (either by choice or because they cannot afford available methods/treatments) are at a disadvantage. Testing for genetic manipulation could prove difficult, making illegal actions nearly impossible to uncover. Allowing drug use would level the playing field for all athletes.

Parents should have support in preventing drug habits in aspiring child athletes.

#### **-Common good**

Athletes would be able to get stronger, faster, and better but an equal playing field would raise the bar of athletic performance. There might be an initial rise in industry profits, but this would probably level back out. The only real beneficiaries of legalized enhancement would be the competing athletes who would not otherwise partake in illegal actions and might suffer from a disadvantage. The slippery slope would make it dangerous to condone drug use on any level.

### **Possible Actions**

Maintain strict rules against drug/genetic enhancements and enforce the rules with consistent, universal, effective testing and detection methods.

#### **-Consequences**

While some athletes could gain a tactical advantage, most would remain on the same level. The sanctity of human life and the integrity of the sport would remain uncompromised.

Athletes would be forced to find alternative methods of athletic improvement, which could prove more dangerous.

Young athletes would not be as likely to turn to drugs for improvement.

#### **-Individual rights/fairness**

Fairness among athletes would be protected by testing/detection efforts, but since total prevention of these technologies could not be avoided, rule-abiding athletes could be at an unfair advantage.

The athlete's right to progress would be hindered by legislation.

#### **-Common good**

It would be better all around if efforts to eliminate drug use and extreme genetic manipulation were employed. Protecting the integrity of sports is important in keeping perspective on health vs. achievement.

### **Final Decision/Conclusion**

The benefits of allowing genetic and drug therapies into accepted sports practices do not justify the potential for abuse and harm to athletes. It is important to make every effort to detect cheating athletes to maintain a level playing field.

But the line between supplementation and drug abuse or acceptable therapy and genetic manipulation is hazy. Despite all efforts, it will be only a matter of time before gene therapies are commonplace threats. All preventative efforts should be taken to deal with the potential of drug/gene therapy abuse before the situation gets out of control.

Sources

I have a series of online articles discussing the dangers and benefits of steroid use, and the possibilities of genetically enhanced, superhuman athletes. I also have sites that sell drugs and detox kits and homepages of organizations against athletic drug enhancement.

Sites include:

[http://www.usantidoping.org/what\\_is/index.htm](http://www.usantidoping.org/what_is/index.htm)

<http://www.anabolicsteroids.com/AnabolicSteroids-Winstrol.html>

<http://www.steroid-encyclopaedia.com/wordonsteroids.shtml>

<http://www.anabolicstore.com/details/articles.htm>

[http://www.playclean.org/antidoping\\_policy.html](http://www.playclean.org/antidoping_policy.html)

<http://www.thinkmuscle.com/articles/gendin/steroids-and-athletes.htm>

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sport/newsid\\_152000/152037.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sport/newsid_152000/152037.stm)

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<http://espn.go.com/otl/athlete/monday.html>

<http://espn.go.com/otl/athlete/intro.html>

<http://sports.findlaw.com/drugs/>

<http://www.sportsci.org/jour/0102/kd.htm>

<http://www.testingclean.com/faq.asp>

<http://shop.store.yahoo.com/steroids/>

[http://www.adfpa.com/drug\\_testing/replacement\\_therapy.shtml](http://www.adfpa.com/drug_testing/replacement_therapy.shtml)

Good topic, good outline, go for it.