

LEVEL OF AWARENESS BY GAMESMASTERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EZEAGU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA OF THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ERGOGENIC AIDS IN SPORTS.

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Abstract

The study investigated the level of awareness of gamesmasters in the secondary schools in Ezeagu LGA on the negative effects of ergogenic aids in sports. It involved 56 games masters and their assistants in the 28 secondary schools in Ezeagu L.G.A. A descriptive survey was the design of the study. Questionnaire was the instrument used. The instrument was validated by three experts in physical education. Data collected were analyzed using frequency table and percentages. The result showed that less than fifty percent of the gamesmasters in the secondary schools in Ezeagu LGA were very much aware of the negative effects of anabolic steroids in sports; less than twenty four percent were aware of negative effects of anabolic steroid, alcohol and smoking while as much as thirty eight percent were not aware of negative effects of smoking, twenty eight percent for alcohol and thirty six percent for anabolic steroids. Based on this finding seminars workshops and talks were recommended for both gamesmasters and student athletes.

Sports federations at state, national and international levels contribute importantly to the fair play environment, through rules and regulations and the training of coaches, referees, judges, medical officers, gamesmasters and other officials. One of the recent rule and regulation put in place today by many sporting bodies is the ban on the use of ergogenic aids. The Olympic solidarity (2008) reported that in the nineteenth century, it was said that unscrupulous athletes sometimes put opium in their opponent's drinks in order to impair their performance. In more recent times, with the advance in medical science, some athletes have used ergogenic aids not on their opponents, but on themselves in order to enhance their own performance.

Ergogenic Aids are supplements used to improve athletes strength, speed and overall performance (Eze and Udo, 2004), some of these ergogenic aids are substances or devices used to increase the potential for work output. In the context of exercise or sport, an ergogenic aid can be broadly defined as a technique or substance used for the purpose of enhancing performance by improving energy production, energy control or energy efficiency. Elsaas (2010) classified ergogenic Aids as nutritional, pharmacological, physiological, psychological and mechanical. It ranges from use of accepted technique such as

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carbohydrate leading to illegal and unsafe approaches such as anabolic – androgenic steroid use. The efficacy of many of these techniques is controversial, whereas the deleterious side effects are clear. Clearly the use of drugs to enhance performance in sports is unacceptable and will be an issue which continues to be addressed at both national and international levels. There is no place in sports for any activity which puts the health of an athlete in danger.

Huetting (2003) opined that the use of a substance or device which improves a man's performance physically without being injurious to his health, can hardly be called unethical, but regretted that most of the substances which athletes form habits of using are those that have been discovered to be harmful to their health and well being. He listed some substances commonly used by athletes as oxygen, caffeine, blood doping, amphetamines and steroid. For instance, oxygen is essential for the production of energy by aerobic processes.

The greater the body's capacity to supply oxygen to the muscles during exercise, the greater the ability to maintain aerobic activity without fatigue. Similarly caffeine is a performance enhancer as it is a central nervous system stimulant and has been used by some athletes as an ergogenic aid in endurance exercise. According to Eze (2006) blood doping involves putting extra blood into the body which increases the level of haemoglobin thereby providing increased oxygen carrying capacity for delivery to and use by the working muscles. He also reported that amphetamines act as stimulants of the central nervous system and the sympathetic division of the peripheral nervous system, and have been used by athletes to enhance performance. Steroids on the other hand are drugs derived from hormones. Anabolic steroids are one group of these hormonal drugs and are used by some athletes as ergogenic aids (Larry, 2006). They are taken to enable increased training, at increased intensity and to reduce the recovery time required between training sessions.

It is pertinent to note that most of these ergogenic aids are prohibited because their presence undermine the fundamental spirit of sport and our collective pursuit of human and sporting excellence. For instance, Olympic solidarity (2008) stated that doping is prohibited in order to protect athletes from: The unfair advantage which may be gained by athletes who use prohibited substances or methods to enhance performance and the possible harmful side effects which some substances or methods can produce pg 157.

In the same vein, a large number of side effects are associated with anabolic steroids. In both men and women it has been linked with liver and kidney disorders and a marked increase in the risk of coronary heart diseases among other things (Larry, 2006). Anabolic steroids, popular among athletes and body builders, increase muscle mass. A variety of types are combined in a process called stacking which athletes use to gain the best attributes from each

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particular drug. However many ergogenic aids have side effects and can be dangerous. The American College of sports medicine (2007) stated that complications such as death from thrombosis, hypertension and seizures have been reported among drug users. In the same vein, Eze and Udo (2004) revealed that consumption of alcohol decreases muscular endurance, counteracts fatigue and should therefore not be recommended to athletes. They also noted that smoking has the following effects on the smokers; increased pulse rate which limits performance, increases heart diseases, causes reduction in oxygen carrying capacity of the blood et cetera.

The use of ergogenic aids is not only detrimental to the health of the user but also brings bad image to the athlete's country in general and the club in particular. For instance, it did not augur well with Nigeria when Victor Kodei, a Nigerian weight lifter during the 2002 common wealth Games in Manchester was denied a medal because he tested positive to Cannabis Sativa (Marijuana). Also Chioma Ajunwa, a star Nigerian Athlete was found guilty of the above offence at the competition organized by the international Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) in Greece after the Atlanta Games.

Youngsters including young athletes often emulate some of the worst aspects of their star athletes. If athletes in secondary schools in Ezeagu LGA are to be protected from various harms that are inherent in most of the ergogenic aids, it then means that the gamesmasters who handle/train these athletes should be conversant with these substances and their various effects, hence the need to conduct this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out the level of awareness of gamesmasters in Ezeagu local government area on the negative effects of ergogenic aids in sports. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to

1. Determine the level of awareness of the gamesmasters in secondary schools in Ezeagu LGA on the negative effects of the use of anabolic steroids as ergogenic aid in sports.
2. Determine the level of awareness of the gamemasters on the negative effects of alcohol as an ergogenic aid in sports
3. Determine the level of awareness of the gamesmasters in Ezeagu on the use of smoking as an ergogenic aid in sports.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What level of awareness do gamesmasters in the secondary schools in Ezeagu possess on the negative effects of the use of anabolic steroids as ergogenic aid in sports?
2. What level of awareness do gamesmasters possess on the negative effects of the use of alcohol as an ergogenic aid in sports?
3. What level of awareness do gamesmasters possess on the negative effect of the use of smoking as an ergogenic aid in sports.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. This was because the purpose of the study was just to document and describe the present status of existence of what is being investigated. The population for the study consisted of all the 56 gamesmasters and their assistants in the 28 secondary schools in Ezeagu local government area of Enugu State. The total number of gamesmasters was therefore considered too few to warrant the use of sample and sampling technique. The gamesmasters were chosen for this study because they are the trainers who are directly in charge of athletes during training and competitions and should therefore know when their athletes use ergogenic aids.

Instrument

A close ended type of questionnaire was constructed by the researcher and used to obtain the required data for this study. The instrument contained items that concerned their level of awareness of negative effects of ergogenic aid in sports. This section of the questionnaire contained fifteen (15) items which were related to the three main research questions they were addressing. Respondents were required to tick (✓) according to their opinions which were weighted in the order of magnitude, for instance, very much aware, aware and not aware.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument for data collected was given to three experts in physical education to validate. They were required to study the questionnaire and make comments on its relevance to the study. Their comments helped the researcher to come up with the final draft before production and distribution.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established using test – retest method. Fifteen (15) gamesmasters from Udi LGA were given the questionnaire to complete. Two weeks later the same questionnaire was administered to the same 15 gamesmasters. The results of the two tests were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. A reliability index of 0.76 was found. This was considered high enough to justify the use of the questionnaire for the study.

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The researcher visited Ezeagu LGA Headquarters Aguoabu Owa on a day when all the gamesmasters and their assistants held a meeting in preparation for all secondary school sports competition (2012). There he administered his questionnaire. This captive audience data collection resulted in a 75% turnover of the questionnaire.

Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using percentages and frequencies.

Results

Research Question 1: What level of awareness do gamesmasters in secondary schools in Ezeagu possess on negative effects of the use of anabolic steroids in sports?

Table 1: Gamesmasters Level of Awareness on the Negative Effects of Anabolic Steroids in Sports.

S/N	Effect	Very Much	Aware	Not aware
1.	Anabolic steroids give unfair advantage to the users	38(89%)	4(11%)	0(0%)
2.	It causes liver disorder	10(24%)	6(14%)	26(62%)
3.	Its side effects include kidney disorder	14(33%)	20(48%)	8 (19%)
4.	It results in marked increase in the risk of heart disease	5(12%)	13(31%)	24(57%)
5.	It leads to complications such as death	30(71%)	9(21%)	3(7%)
6.	It increases the chances of being hypertensive	6(14%)	5(12%)	31(74%)
	Total	103(41%)	57(23%)	92(36%)

Data in table 1 revealed that 103(41%) respondents were very much aware that the use of anabolic steroids as ergogenic aids have negative effects on the users in sports; 57 (23%) were simply aware while 92(36%) respondents were not aware that anabolic steroids used as ergogenic aids have negative effects on the users.

Research Question 2: What level of awareness do gamesmasters in secondary schools in Ezeagu LGA possess on the negative effects of alcohol as ergogenic aid in sports?

Table 2: Gamesmasters Level of Awareness on Negative Effect of Alcohol as an Ergogenic Aid in Sports.

S/N	Effect	Very Much	Aware	Not aware
7.	Intake of alcohol by athletes can lead to sports injury	37(88%)	5(12%)	0(0%)
8.	Alcohol reduces oxygen debt	0(0%)	6(14%)	36(86%)
9.	It impairs ability to reason	18(43%)	16(38%)	8(19%)
10.	Alcohol weakens the muscle leading to drop in performance	27(64%)	10(24%)	5(12%)
11.	It decreases muscular endurance	19(45%)	12(28%)	11(26%)
	Total	101(48%)	49(23%)	60(28%)

Data in table 2 revealed that 101(48%) respondents were very much aware that alcohol used as ergogenic aid in sports has negative effects on the users; 49 (23%) respondents were simply aware while 60(28%) respondents were not aware that alcohol has negative effects on the users.

Research Question 3: What level of awareness do gamesmasters in secondary schools in Ezeagu LGA possess on the negative effects of smoking as an ergogenic aid in sports?

Table 3: Level Awareness of Gamesmasters in Ezeagu on the Effect of Smoking as Ergogenic and in Sports.

S/N	Effect	Very Much	Aware	Not Aware
12	Smoking of substances of causes Throat Infection	36(86%)	6(14%)	0(0%)
13	it leads to irreversible brain Damage	4(10%)	7(16%)	31(74%)
14	Smoking increases pulse rate and Limits performance	9(21%)	8(19%)	25(60%)
15	it reduces oxygen carrying Capacity	13(31%)	11(26%)	18(42%)
16	Capacity of blood contributes to heart diseases	28(68%)	7(16%)	7(16%)

Data in table 3 revealed that 90(43%) respondents indicate very much awareness of the fact that smoking as an ergogenic aid has negative effect on sports users; 39(19%) respondents showed awareness of the negative effect of smoking as ergogenic aid while 81(38%) responses reveal non awareness of the negative effects of alcohol.

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Discussion

A major finding of this study revealed that gamesmasters in the secondary schools in Ezeagu Local Government Area Enugu State are very much aware that anabolic steroids give unfair advantage to the users in competitions and that their use gives rise to some health complications such as death. Unfortunately they were not very much aware that the complications may manifest themselves in form of liver, kidney and heart disorders as well as increase in the chances of becoming hypertensive. This later finding is not in agreement with Lacey (2006) who associated the use of anabolic steroids with liver and kidney disorders and a marked increase in the risk of coronary heart diseases. A good number of the gamesmasters were very much aware that intake of alcohol by athletes often lead to sports injuries, weakens the muscles leading to a drop in performance and also decreases muscular endurance. The researcher is happy with these findings which agreed with Eze and Udo (2004) who reported that consumption of alcohol by athletes decreases muscular endurance and counteracts fatigue. But, it is not encouraging to observe that the gamesmasters in the study area were not aware that alcohol reduces oxygen debt and therefore affects performance in sports.

The study also revealed that the gamesmasters are very much aware that smoking of substances like cigarette and marijuana cause throat infection and contribute to heart diseases. These findings are completely in agreement with Eze and Udo (2004) who submitted that smoking leads to heart diseases. It is then unfortunate to note that most of the gamesmasters who work very closely with the student athletes are not aware that smoking leads to irreversible brain damage, increased pulse rate and reduced oxygen carrying capacity of the blood.

Conclusion

This study investigated the level of awareness of negative effects of ergogenic aids in sports by the gamesmasters in Ezeagu Local government area of Enugu State. The data analyzed lead to the following conclusions – that most of the gamesmasters in the secondary schools in Ezeagu LGA are very much aware of some negative effects of ergogenic aids used by their athletes to enhance performance. A good number of them are unaware of the negative effects of some ergogenic aids such as its effect on the liver, kidney, and its effect on the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study it was recommended that the gamesmasters through talks, seminars and workshops should be educated on the harmful effects of using ergogenic aids in sports. Such workshops and seminars

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should also be organized for athletes who actually endanger their lives by using such aids. Where possible the sale of alcohol, cigarettes and drugs should not be allowed within the school compound as well as the sports arena.

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