

Parental pressure pushes young athletes to doping

February 25 2016

Pressure to be perfect from parents makes young male athletes positive about doping, research from the University of Kent shows.

Research from the University's School of Sport and Exercise Sciences has revealed that parental pressure makes junior athletes more likely to use banned substances to enhance sporting performance.

Because of the risks identified in the findings, lead researcher Daniel Madigan suggests anti-doping programmes should target junior athletes early in their sporting careers, and that parents should be made of the potential consequences of such pressure.

Published by the Journal of Sports Sciences, the first-of-its-kind research discovered that young athletes' [attitudes](#) to doping are more influenced by their parents than anyone else.

The research examined perfectionism and attitudes towards doping in 129 male British junior athletes (average age 17 years) in four different aspects of perfectionism.

The study found that it was only parental pressure that showed a positive relationship with positive doping attitudes. The other factors investigated were an athlete's striving for perfection, their concerns about making mistakes and pressure from their coach to be perfect.

The study will now be widened to examine if young female athletes are

similar and if the findings are the same for those taking part in team versus individual sports.

Daniel Madigan, who is a PhD student, said: 'The problem of pressure from parents watching their children play sports is widely known, with referees and sporting bodies highlighting the difficulties and taking steps to prevent it.

'With the rise of so-called "tiger" parenting where strict and demanding parents push their children to high levels of achievement, this study reveals the price [young athletes](#) may choose to pay to meet their [parents](#) expectations and dreams.'

Perfectionism and attitudes towards [doping](#) in junior athletes (Daniel Madigan; Professor Joachim Stoeber, School of Psychology, University of Kent; Professor Louis Passfield, School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, University of Kent) is published online in the *Journal of Sports Sciences*.

It can be viewed at

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02640414.2015.1068441>

Provided by University of Kent

Citation: Parental pressure pushes young athletes to doping (2016, February 25) retrieved 9 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-02-parental-pressure-young-athletes-doping.html>

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