

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

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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](#)."

Provided by European Society of Endocrinology

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