How Are The Steroids In Professional Sports Affecting The Middle School Athletes?

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Abstract

In recent decades, performance-enhancing drugs have been used more and more by professional athletes and middle school athletes throughout the world. There are many controversies surrounding the topic of steroids nationwide. This research paper will examine exactly what steroids are and how the use of steroids by professional athletes is affecting middle school athletes. The paper also identifies why middle school athletes tend to use these performance-enhancing drugs and why steroids should remain illegal in middle schools and professional sports around the world. Some statistics are also given.

Research Objective: How are steroids in professional sports affecting middle school athletes?

Introduction

The use of steroids is becoming a very controversial issue in the world of sports and entertainment. Professional athletes have begun to use steroids in order to better their physical performance in their respective sports. The type of steroid used by the athlete is an anabolic steroid. The topic of anabolic steroids and their use by professional athletes is debatable among the media, the athletes, and the fans of the sports. Using steroids is not fair for the fans or for the sports because they are taking away from the skill and talent of the specific sport. Anabolic steroids should remain banned from professional sports because the use of the performance-enhancing drug is cheating the sport, and the drug has several side effects which are causing injuries and possible death to the users of the drugs.

What Are Anabolic Steroids?

“Anabolic steroid, alternatively known as anabolic-androgenic steroid, is composed of two Greek originating words” (ESPN). The former means “to build” and the latter “masculinizing.” These man-made products are derivatives of the anabolic hormone that is naturally produced in males: testosterone. The physical and biological effects of the natural hormone are twofold. Androgenic effects include maturing the male reproductive system by hair growth and voice deepening. Muscle

development, due to dietary protein retention, is the anabolic effect. Therefore, the interest of athletes evolves from the anabolic properties of the synthetic version of the naturally occurring hormone. “Anabolic steroids are effective in improving sporty performance.”

The purpose is to increase strength and muscle mass. They can be taken either by injection or orally. Anabolic steroids can be officially prescribed to handle some situations derived from deficiency of steroids or loss of muscle mass. However, “misuse of steroids can lead to severe medical problems.”

Background

Junior Seau was a professional athlete whose successes in his career were deterred because of his use of anabolic steroids. Seau was a professional football player for the National Football League. Seau had many career highlights and awards, including attending the Pro Bowl on twelve different occasions, being NFL Linebacker of the Year, AFC Player of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year, San Diego Chargers Hall of Fame, and many other accolades. Seau excelled in his sports position and was considered one of the great linebackers in the league. In the article “Could Anabolic Steroid Usage Be the Real Culprit in These Suicides,” the writer infers that people have known that Seau was using anabolic steroids throughout his career. In the article, it is stated, “…the use of anabolic steroids or the withdrawal effects be another reason why…Junior Seau committed suicide. Seau was depressed.”

Effect On The Middle School Athletes

Middle school athletes are being badly affected by the use of steroids in professional sports. It is reported that middle school athletes are following the trend of using steroids. They do this for image improvement and better sports performance. In a study in West Virginia, the most commonly reported reason for using steroids among middle school students was to “improve appearance – look bigger or better” (43%). This response was given twice as often as the second most common response, which was “improving sports performance” (22%). This figure, combined with the fact that 36.8% of middle school steroid users do not practice any sports activity, suggests that the abuse of anabolic steroids has spread to middle school students due to their usage in professional sports.

Statistics of steroid use among professional athletes are high and a well-known fact. However, many people are unaware that the use of steroids is becoming a problem in middle schools, especially among those who participate in school sports. A surprising number of teenagers start using performance-enhancing drugs, and while they have negative side effects for everyone, the side effects can be even more devastating for teenage steroid users. Some statistics of steroid use for teenagers, middle school athletes, and professional athletes are discussed below.

Statistics On The Use Of Steroids In Middle School Athletes

Anabolic steroids are often associated with bodybuilders and athletes. But many young people are starting to take illegal steroids to improve their size, strength, or muscle mass. Even girls are known to take steroids to improve the appearance of their bodies. Although steroids are often associated with male use, 2011 steroid statistics show that there is little difference by gender. The following middle school athlete statistics take a closer look at the problem of steroid use in today's youth.

- Between 5-12% of male students in middle school have used anabolic steroids by the time they reach their senior year.
- In 1997, 4.1% of secondary students admitted to using steroids at some point, which rose significantly from 2006.
- The fastest-growing group of steroid users happens to be secondary women.
- Many teenagers started using anabolic steroids as young as 15 years old (Lau, 2008).

Reasons For The Use Of Steroids In Middle School Athletes

Middle school sports will continue to be more competitive, and playing well in middle school often means teenage athletes will end up with good scholarships and an opportunity to play sports professionally. Unfortunately, this pressure, along with the use of steroids among professional athletes, has increased the use of steroids in high school sports (Nieman, 2009).

Following are some of the steroid use statistics among high school athletes, and it is easy to see that this has become a problem.

- 44% of middle school athletes report that it is easy for them to get steroids, even without a doctor's prescription.
- 85% of teenage athletes never receive any education on steroids and steroid side effects.
- 40% of teenage athletes using steroids say they decided to use drugs because they were inspired by a professional athlete who improves performance.
- 11% of middle school male athletes admit that they have taken steroids at least once to try to gain an advantage in their sport.
- 57% of teenage athletes using steroids say they felt they needed to take steroids because of pictures seen in muscle magazines.
- Steroid use often takes place openly in cafeterias, weight rooms, and changing rooms in public and private high schools.
- While most middle school athletes realize that there is a risk of taking steroids, they are often

willing to sacrifice their long-term health in order to enjoy the short-term benefits of taking steroids. All those pressures do not seem to be going to disappear soon, unfortunately (Hartgens, 2004).

Use Of Steroids In Athletes

The NID (National Institute on Drug Abuse) reports many statistics on steroids. They say that 1.6% of high school students in grade 12 have used steroids in their lives. Since middle school athletes have seen so many athletes take steroids, they want to improve their game as well. They have seen their heroes escape with the use of steroids several times, and this has led to a problem in the middle school locker room today.

Of course, while much of the use of steroids is common among middle and high school athletes, it is important to keep in mind that it is not just athletes who use steroids. Girls and boys who care about their body image often use steroids as well. Although using steroids comes with potential punishment for those involved in professional sports, steroid use is still very popular among professional athletes. Steroids give athletes a competitive advantage, and that is quite a benefit for many athletes who use steroids, despite the ban on steroid use among all professional sports organizations (Kutscher, 2002).

Discussion

The mindset of an athlete is competitive, and the drive of an athlete is to win no matter what circumstances that athlete encounters. But for some athletes who play professional major league baseball, the drive to win comes with a risk and a consequence. The danger is the use of performance-increasing medicines like steroids, but the consequences are definite bans from the league, stripping of all goals, achievements, and milestones, or global catastrophic embarrassment in the world of sports, especially in the baseball community (WICHSTRM, 2006).

Steroid usage in sports accounts for many other social problems. For instance, drug abuse that pertains to the athletes over the usage of steroids, and the stereotypes they (professional baseball players) give themselves as well as those who don’t use steroids who also play baseball. Athletes who use performance-enhancing drugs or steroids should take precautions because they are not only violating sports regulations but are also gaining close encounters with banishment from the league and death (Hervey, 1975).

Disadvantages Of Using Steroids

Steroids come with severe physical health effects, too. Males can develop baldness, breasts, infertility, and shrunken testicles. Females can develop an enlarged clitoris, a deeper voice, and growing body hair. Both women and men might know about the increased risk of tendinitis, severe

acne, high cholesterol, liver abnormalities, heart issues, high blood pressure, and hormone abnormalities. Many athletes exhibit a change in behaviour; they display aggressive behaviour, depression, and rage or violence. Drug dependency sicknesses or infections can also occur, such as hepatitis or HIV, if you are injecting dangerous drugs. Teenage athletes are also at huge risk; their growth and development are impaired, and they are at a high risk of future health issues. There are many people who are still in favour of steroid use in sports.

Recommendations

It is important that we continue to educate middle school students on the effects of steroids. Knowing the history and medical effects of anabolic steroids provides us with a better understanding. We must continue to try and remove anabolic steroids from high school sports and out of the reach of the adolescent community. Anabolic steroids are powerful, addictive, and dangerous. There are medical reasons for using them rarely, but in general, these drugs are best avoided. If students want to build muscle, it is better to do it the old-fashioned way, with the help of protein and a lot of time spent in the gym!

Conclusion

Professional athletes who use steroids consider their drug use a “victimless crime” – something that does not affect other people. However, the reality is different. The use of steroids in professional sports is encouraging middle school athletes to adopt this bad habit and avoid physical exercise. There is a need to discourage the use of steroids in society. The use of steroids in sports is completely unethical. The act is both illegal and immoral because of the negative side effects that come along with its usage. The negative long-term effects that steroids have on the body and mind of the users cause unhappiness in middle school athletes.

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