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How social fear of drugs in the non-sporting world creates a framework for doping policy in the sporting world

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Abstract

Doping policy is usually presented as though it sits separate from other societal issues, and yet in part, it is clearly a reflection of the broader concerns and historical responses to drug use in the non-sporting world. This is an under-researched aspect of doping policy formation and continuity. With reference to a number of key 'drug myths' and a broad discursive framework of fear and 'othering' in the non-sporting world, this article will attempt to show how the 'drug problem' has been essentially framed in that arena so that comparisons can be made to the development of doping policy. It will be argued that the broader social context has long inflected upon doping administrators and doping policy and that this has resulted in a relative mirroring of policy formation discourses and trajectory found in the non-sporting world. It will be further argued that this mirroring is reflected in a number of key drug myths and discursive positionings

that have emerged in the sporting world: for example, that efficacious performance enhancement is a simple issue, that the health risks are like playing Russian Roulette, that doping undermines sport/morality to a degree that other forms of cheating do not and that doping policy is rational. It will be argued that a fear-based approach to drugs policy can result in a policy that does not protect those it is supposed to and results in a disproportionate and uninformed response.

Keywords:

- drug problem
- PIEDs
- performance-enhancing drugs
- history
- fear
- policy
- moral panic
- mirroring
- myths
- sport

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