

Athlete passion linked to acceptance of performance enhancing drugs

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The more of a certain kind of passion varsity athletes have for their sport, the more favourable their attitudes towards the use of performance enhancing drugs, or PEDs, according to a recent study.

Published in the *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, the paper is the first to show that passion levels can help predict a collegiate athlete's attitude towards [performance enhancing drugs](#).

Previous research has indicated that there are two types of passion involved with leisure activities. Harmonious passion involves feelings of enjoyment, and the activity blends with the athlete's life. Obsessive passion involves an inability to disengage from an activity, or feelings of guilt from not participating.

"Passion is often associated with positive words, such as love and dedication, but research suggests that it can control us as well," said Wade Wilson, lead author on the paper and lecturer in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo. "Awareness of the motivations and thought processes that may contribute to negative behaviour is important, and has the potential to lead to effective interventions and informative workshops for athletes."

As part of the research, nearly 600 male and [female athletes](#) at the varsity or all-star level at four different Ontario universities completed a series of surveys.

"We found that regardless of gender, athletes who reported higher obsessive passion indicated more lenient attitudes towards PEDs, while athletes who reported higher harmonious passion held more conservative attitudes towards them," said Wilson. "These results suggest that the closer an activity or sport is linked to our identity, there is an increased possibility we might do anything to maintain that identity."

The researchers hope the study will help coaches and administrators see the link between [passion](#) and attitudes towards PEDs, to better identify athletes at risk of using prohibited substances. The study also recommends that coaches remain mindful of the central role competitive sports can have in the lives and identities of athletes, and attempt to create or maintain cultures that allow [athletes](#) to derive enjoyment and perspective from participation, while moving away from a mentality of winning at all cost.

The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) governs regulations around performance enhancing drugs in varsity sport in Canada. The CCES maintains a list of banned and prohibited substances that is updated annually.

Provided by University of Waterloo

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