

## A National Investigation of Psychosocial Factors Facilitating Doping in Body Builders

A number of studies have previously investigated psychological factors associated with doping in sport and exercise. Factors such as motivation (e.g., Donahue et al., 2006), attitudes (Peretti-Watel et al., 2004), achievement orientation (Sas-Nowosielski & Swiatkowska, 2008), and perceived norms (Wiefferink et al., 2008) have been empirically linked with doping in sport and/or exercise. A further line of doping research has investigated the construct of moral disengagement. In a series of three studies Lucidi and colleagues established a consistent positive link between moral disengagement and intention to dope and reported doping behaviour (Lucidi et al., 2004, 2008; Zelli et al., 2010). Moral disengagement incorporates a series of eight psychosocial mechanisms that are thought to facilitate engagement in transgressive activities (Bandura, 1991). As well as doping, moral disengagement has been positively linked with other harmful conduct in sport such as antisocial behaviour (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2007, 2009, 2010). Importantly, the studies of Lucidi and colleagues, as well as many of the existing studies that have considered psychological factors involved in doping, have utilized quantitative approaches in their investigations and studied samples that consisted of a high percentage of non dopers. These limitations were addressed in a recent qualitative study that investigated moral disengagement in strength athletes from a gym in central England who were admitted dopers (Boardley & Rolleston, in preparation). This study identified the consistent use of moral disengagement in these athletes and how the use of moral disengagement may help doping athletes to justify and externalize blame for their use of prohibited substances. This study also found evidence that moral disengagement may be taught to athletes by influential others as part of their socialization into the adoption of doping practices. However, as this study utilized a case-study design, there is a need for large-scale studies that apply qualitative methodologies with doping athletes to determine whether the use of moral disengagement is a consistent phenomenon in athletes from different gyms and who are based in different areas of England. This will help to achieve a greater depth of understanding of the psychosocial factors that facilitate athletes' socialization into doping from the view point of athletes who have actively been through this process. The current project aims to address the limitations of past research by conducting a qualitative investigation of moral disengagement in gym users who are admitted dopers. This will involve conducting semi-structured interviews with admitted dopers who would be purposefully sampled from all nine regions of England. As well as achieving a detailed understanding of factors that may promote doping in strength athletes, the knowledge established through the current

project could also provide an insight into more general features of the doping socialization process that may transfer to other sport and exercise disciplines.