

News Release

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Info website in 20 languages on drug abuse and doping among children and youths Faster, higher, further – cooler?

Six-pack stomachs and slim waists are ideals of beauty – even among children and youths. Pills, teas, plasters and syringes are all touted as means to dream bodies, without the need for physical exercise and healthy nutrition. Drug abuse and doping have become widespread problems, and not only in the competitive sports arena. Side-effects include acne, testicle shrinkage and hallucinations. A website put up by sports scientists at the Technische Universität München (TUM) sheds light on the dangerous side-effects of doping and provides teachers and trainers with background information and educational material in 20 European languages.

An estimated three to twelve percent of all children and youths in Germany take medications that they do not need in the hope of becoming more attractive and performing better. Boys often want to impress the girls with their muscular bodies, while girls tend to concentrate on losing weight. On top of this comes curiosity and the desire for approval in peer groups and by the other sex, as well as the allure of all things forbidden. Although young people outside of competitive sports need not worry about doping tests, they should worry all the more about adverse health consequences that can be particularly severe in young, developing bodies.

When boys build up muscles using anabolic steroids, they risk stunted growth, testicle shrinkage, breast formation and skin disfiguration by severe acne on the shoulders and chest. Add to this the threat of cardiovascular disease, as well as liver and kidney damage. Girls who take appetite curbing hormones in the quest for a slim figure frequently suffer from irritability, restlessness, aggressiveness and even hallucinations.

Sports scientists at the Chair of Sports and Health Promotion at the TU München, in collaboration with international doping experts, have put together a website with information on the way the human body reacts to the 15 most commonly used doping substance groups, and what long- and short-term effects come from the use of these substances and medications. The website addresses teachers and trainers with extensive background information on the inner workings of the human body, as well as educational material on doping side-effects. Translations into 20 European languages will allow teachers and trainers throughout the European Union and beyond to use the material on doping prevention.

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Readers interested in technical aspects will also find a collection of scientific papers on the current state of research.

Further information available at:
www.doping-prevention.sp.tum.de

Technische Universität München (TUM) is one of Germany's leading universities. It has roughly 420 professors, 6,500 academic and non-academic staff (including those at the university hospital "Rechts der Isar"), and 23,000 students. It focuses on the engineering sciences, natural sciences, life sciences, medicine, and economic sciences. After winning numerous awards, it was selected as an "Elite University" in 2006 by the Science Council (Wissenschaftsrat) and the German Research Foundation (DFG). The university's global network includes an outpost in Singapore. TUM is dedicated to the ideal of a top-level research based entrepreneurial university. <http://www.tum.de>

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