A Cross-sectional study on doping knowledge of national sports team athletes in Sri Lanka

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Doping can be seen among athletes of different sport types, age categories, achievement levels and education levels. Doping is known as the use of illegal substances or methods by athletes to enhance performance during competition or out of the competition. The aims of this cross-sectional survey were to assess the knowledge level of Sri Lankan elite athletes towards doping and to study the influence of selected demographic factors on athletes' knowledge toward doping. A total of 308 national-level athletes representing 17 sports participated in the study. The study population consisted of 66% males and 34% females. The age of the participants ranged from 15 to 42. A questionnaire was distributed among the participants to gather data on demographic information and knowledge. One-way ANOVA was used to compare mean knowledge scores among athletes representing different sports categories, age groups, achievement levels and education levels. Independent sample t-test was used to compare mean knowledge scores of male and female athletes. The overall mean scores for knowledge of the participants was 41.1%. Hence, it can be concluded that the participants’ knowledge of doping is inadequate (mean knowledge score was below 50%). Differences existed among mean knowledge scores of athletes representing different sport types, age groups, achievement levels and education levels ($P<0.05$). Thus, it can be concluded that sport type, age, the highest sports achievement and education level significantly influenced athletes’ knowledge towards doping. Further, gender and training age did not have a significant effect on athletes’ knowledge toward doping ($P>0.05$).

Keywords: doping, doping knowledge, elite athletes