

Performance Enhancing Methods and Substances: Where do you draw the line?

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Performance Enhancing Substances and Methods are banned from sport for three reasons, -- to protect the clean athlete; to protect health and to ensure that no practice goes against the true spirit of sports. The enabling instrument that underscores the current procedures and processes in the anti-doping realm is the WADA prohibited list which is updated and validated each calendar year, neither without debate nor controversy.

The battle against doping in sport whilst first introduced in the Mexico Olympics was given its global clout and dimension when the WADA was inaugurated in 1999 and its first "CODE" unveiled in 2003. Sports bodies have to be signatories and be compliant to the Code whilst governments have to demonstrate their buy in through signing the UNESCO convention. Enabling instruments to ensure implementation have been crafted and include International Standards, Technical Documents and Guidelines .Efforts are being gradually racked up through evolution rather than revolution. Is the war being won? This question will evoke mixed responses.

Some feel that this war is constantly challenged by a series of crises, namely crisis of confidence in the processes; crisis of credibility in the enforcers and crisis of cynicism in the performances. There will be some voices calling for a halt to the war citing the high costs and perceived poor returns. However whilst there are certainly gaps it cannot be denied that deterrence testing and education have brought in their dividends. New frontiers like action against non-analytical violations and errant entourage, the athlete's biological passport and the paradigm of intelligent testing are expected to sharpen the teeth of enforcement. The war must indeed continue and persist.