

STEROIDS

"I just wanted to boost my performance." These are the words spoken by numerous athletes who have been captured using steroids. The continuous stress and pressure on athletes to perform well has caused some to breakdown and take steroids as an easy way to bulk up. Steroids amongst athletes is not the only problem. Other reasons for taking steroids may be to heal injury, improve appearance, or for various social factors. High School is definitely tough on self-esteem for teenagers who look to fit in. Many simply desire to improve their physical appearance, but they are too lazy, or do not have enough time to work out. What do they do? They resort to the use of anabolic steroids.

Everyone has heard of steroids, but many people do not know exactly what they are. Natural steroids play a key role in the body processes of living things. They are naturally produced by plants and animals, and are used for various reasons. Steroids include sterols, such as cholesterol, bile acids from the liver, adrenal hormones, sex hormones, and poisons in certain toads. Sex steroids in humans give men and women the characteristics that make up the sex, such as the type of voice, and the physical build. Adrenal steroids, produced in the cortex of the adrenal gland in humans, regulate protein and carbohydrate metabolism. Aldosterone, another steroid produced in the adrenal cortex, plays a role in the mineral and water balance of the body.

Anabolic steroids are commercially produced by chemical methods from the male hormone testosterone. Artificial steroids were first developed for medical purposes during World War II (1939-1945) by the German army. The Germans gave it to their soldiers to make them more aggressive in combat. After the war, doctors in Europe and the U.S. used steroids to treat anemia, malnutrition, and to help patients recover faster from surgery. Then, in the 1940s, artificial steroids began to enter the athletic world. Body builders in Eastern Europe were taking testosterone in various forms. In the 1950s, athletes used the anabolic steroids to improve their performance in international competition. With the government's approval, coaches in the Soviet Union gave the lab-produced steroids to their athletes, mainly of whom were weight-lifters and shot-putters. When other athletes around the world noticed the Soviets' winning records (Soviet weight-lifters won seven medals at the 1952 Olympics), athletes in many countries began to experiment with steroid use.

In 1956, American doctor John B. Ziegler worked with a drug company to produce anabolic steroids in the United States. Soon after, American athletes, particularly football players, began using steroids as early as the 1960s. The health dangers of steroids were not yet recognized, and athletes obtained steroids legally from their team doctors. When state laws against steroid use were passed in the 1960s, a black market for the artificial testosterone quickly developed. Steroids eventually found their way into school athletics, at both the college and high school levels. During the 1980s, steroid use spread outside the athletic world. Recently the use of steroids has been increasing amongst non-athletes for various reasons. (See Chart)

Due to the harmful effects of anabolic steroids, the Federal and State governments have established laws and regulations against the use of them. In 1988, Congress passed what is known as the Anti-Drug Abuse Act. This act made the distribution or possession of anabolic steroid for non-medical reasons a Federal offense. The penalty for distribution to minors is a prison offense. In 1990, Congress made the laws even stricter, and classified anabolic steroids as a controlled substance. The law also increased penalties for steroids use and shipping. To stop the selling of steroids on the black market, the law requires pharmaceutical firms to be strict with their production and record-keeping.

So far, over 25 states have passed laws and regulations to control steroid abuse, and many other states are considering similar legislation.

Steroids are beneficial in many ways, but along with the good there is always a negative side. Some side effects in males include shrinking of the testicles,

reduced sperm count, impotence, baldness, breast development, difficulty or pain urinating, and an enlarged prostate. In females some complications are growth of facial hair, deepened voice, breast reduction, male patterned baldness, enlargement of the clitoris, and irregular or cessation of the menstrual cycle. Growth can also be prematurely halted in adolescents, which may prove to be disastrous to their social development in later years. For more serious side effects, and how often they occur, see the graph above.

\$\$\$ PRICES OF VARIOUS TYPES OF STEROIDS \$\$\$

STEROID	QUANTITY	PRICE
Clomid	10 * 50 mg.	\$10
Cytadren	56 * 250 mg.	\$80
Deca Durabolin	3 * 200 mg.	\$50
Dianabol	100 * 5 mg.	\$30
Durabolin	10 ml. Multidose	100 mg. Per ml. \$65
Nolvadex	30 * 20 mg.	\$10
Primobolan Depot	per 100 mg. vial	\$10
PromoTeston Depot	3 * 1 ml.	\$30
Sustanon 250	per vial	\$10
Testosterone Cypionate	200 mg.	\$10
Winstrol (Stanozolol)	100 5 mg. tabs	\$30

Many people do not think about it, but steroids also have a negative effect on an addict's financial standing. Because steroids are sold on the streets and across the internet, there is a large price to pay. (See the chart above). However, people who are badly addicted are willing to pay whatever price they must to obtain the steroid.

Steroids also have psychological and physiological effects on the user. Bigger muscles can help increase a persons self-esteem, but the steroids that build those muscles can lead to lowered self-esteem, depression, inability to think clearly, and a lack of energy. Scientists are just beginning to investigate the impact of anabolic steroids on the mind and behavior. Many athletes report "feeling good" about themselves while on a steroids regimen. The downside, according to Harvard researchers, is wide mood swings ranging from periods of violent, even homicidal episodes known as "roid rages," to bouts of depression when the drugs are stopped. The Harvard study also noted that anabolic steroid users may suffer from paranoid jealousy, extreme irritability, delusions, and impaired judgment from feelings of invincibility. After reading the facts, one must wonder, "Why would a person want to do this to themselves, especially when the negatives clearly outweigh the positives?"

