

ADHD - Issues and Controversies in High Performance Sport

Speakers

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Abstract

ADHD is a neuro-developmental disorder with onset in childhood or adolescence. It is characterised by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity with associated impairments in daily life and in sport. It is under studied in sport and is likely at times both under-diagnosed and over-diagnosed. It is unique among the mental health disorders in sport in that one of the principal treatments is a potentially performance enhancing agent for which a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) is required. This may create too great a focus on stimulant treatment as the mainstay in managing ADHD in sport. As ADHD is a clinical diagnosis with no confirmatory laboratory tests there are also concerns that athletes may 'game' the TUE process to acquire potentially performance enhancing stimulants. A thorough clinical assessment is necessary primarily to ensure that the athlete's health needs are met but also to satisfy the requirements of antidoping authorities. The condition impacts others in the immediate environment, and it is helpful to provide education and support for family, friends and members of the sporting entourage.