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General practitioners' views and knowledge about anabolic steroid use--survey of GPs in a high prevalence area.

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The aim of this study was to assess GPs' attitudes, clinical behaviour, information needs and contact with anabolic-androgenic steroid (AAS) users in an area reported to have a high prevalence of AAS use. It was a cross-sectional study of GPs using a self-administered questionnaire. The sample comprised of 202 GPs practising in the Central Business District and inner city area of Sydney took part. Of 164 eligible GPs, 143 responded (87% response rate). Fifty-three per cent of respondents reported that they had seen at least one patient in the last year who told them they had used AASs for non-medical purposes; 6% indicated that they had seen more than 20 patients who mentioned AAS use. Two per cent of respondents reported prescribing AASs for body-building purposes and 6% indicated a willingness to do so in a hypothetical situation. Forty per cent of respondents reported that they would be willing to provide harm minimization advice to AAS users; 77% of respondents were interested in obtaining more information about AAS use, most frequently requested in the form of a fact sheet or pamphlet. Most GPs in the area surveyed had some contact with AAS users in their practice. Some GPs had favourable attitudes towards prescription of AASs for non-medical purposes. These attitudes require further exploration. The results of this survey invite a reappraisal of many policy initiatives involving GPs aimed at reducing AAS-related harm.

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