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Attitudes of coaches towards doping.

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**BACKGROUND:**

Coaches are usually held to be among the main actors of doping prevention campaigns. The aim of this study was to document certain attitudes of professional coaches faced with doping, and to evaluate how they confronted it on an everyday basis.

**METHODS:**

Experimental design: prospective study by self-reporting questionnaire. Setting and participants: the questionnaire was mailed to the last 800 graduated coaches (1994-1997) in the Lorraine region, Eastern France. The 260 responding coaches comprised 77 women and 183 men, the average age being 30.8 +/- 8.0 years (mean +/- standard deviation).

**RESULTS:**

10.3% of coaches consider that an athlete may use doping with no health hazard with the help of a physician, and 30.0% that an athlete who declines doping has little chance of succeeding. 5.8% had used doping drugs in the last twelve months (1 to 6 times). 13.5% of coaches mention that athletes (1 to 5 per coach on average) told them they had been prompted to use doping drugs during the previous 12 months. 80.7% consider that the current methods of preventing doping in sport are ineffective, and 98.1% of them consider that they have a role to play within this context, but 80.3% consider themselves badly trained in the prevention of doping. Only 10.4% have organized a doping prevention action during the last 12 months.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

In this study, professional coaches do not seem to be efficient in the prevention of doping. Further education and training for coaches on doping is advisable.

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