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Anabolic steroid users' attitudes towards physicians.

Pope HG, Kanayama G, Ionescu-Pioggia M, Hudson JI.

Biological Psychiatry Laboratory, McLean Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Belmont, MA 02478, USA. pope@mclean.harvard.edu

**AIMS:**

To assess anabolic-androgenic steroid (AAS) users' trust in the knowledge and advice of physicians.

**DESIGN:**

Interviews of AAS users and non-users.

**SETTING:**

Research offices.

**PARTICIPANTS:**

Eighty weight-lifters (43 AAS users, 37 non-users) recruited by advertisement in Massachusetts and Florida, USA.

**MEASUREMENTS:**

Personal interviews and questionnaire responses, including subjects' ratings of physicians' knowledge regarding various health- and drug-related topics. AAS users also rated their level of trust in various sources of information about AAS.

**FINDINGS:**

Both groups of subjects gave physicians high ratings on knowledge about general health, cigarette smoking, alcohol, and conventional illicit drugs, but gave physicians markedly and significantly lower ratings on knowledge about AAS. When rating sources of information on AAS, users scored physicians as no more reliable than their friends, Internet sites, or the person(s) who sold them the steroids. Forty percent of users trusted information on AAS from their drug dealers at least as much as information from any physician that they had seen, and 56% had never revealed their AAS use to any physician.

**CONCLUSION:**

AAS users show little trust in physicians' knowledge about AAS, and often do not disclose their AAS use to physicians. These attitudes compromise physicians' ability to educate or treat AAS users. Physicians can respond to these problems by learning more about AAS and by maintaining a high index of suspicion when evaluating athletic male patients.

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