

'IDUHED': An Ethno Pharmacological Study of the Injecting Use of Human Enhancement Drugs

Rebekah Brennan

Department of Health, Sport & Exercise Science, Waterford Institute of Technology, Cork Road, Waterford



Waterford Institute of Technology
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA PHORT LÁIRGE



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

Background to Research

Increasingly people are using human enhancement drugs (HED) to improve and augment their physical appearance. Of particular interest is the injecting use of HE products, and the degree to which injecting of these products for muscle building, tanning and body 'site' enhancement has entered into mainstream society. Users do not identify as injecting drug users and are less informed about risks associated with the injecting of these unregulated products such as potential for product adulteration, contamination and needle sharing. The study of HED sourcing and usage has not been carried out before and will contribute to policy development, regulation, clinical intervention, health promotion and harm reduction for injecting use of HEDs across the European Union. One of the unique aspects of this research is its examination of HED users use of the internet to source products, and how the internet influences their views and usage of such products. This research is in its preliminary stages.

Human Enhancement Drugs



Anabolic Steroids



Melanotan I & II



Site Enhancement Oils or Liquids

Study Outcomes

The study will achieve a better understanding of the user profile, examine the **sociocultural** and demographic profile and aetiology, **cyber sourcing** trends and consequences of this form of injecting drug use in order to inform and measure the effect of current legislative controls, develop recommendations for an **early warning system** for new emergent HED drugs, and ultimately contribute to the design of targeted online prevention and harm reduction brief interventions.

Research Aim

This research aims to investigate the contemporary user profile, sourcing route, product endorsement, risk perceptions and health outcomes of injected HEDs.

The HEDs that form the focus for this study are:

- **Anabolic steroid and growth hormones** (CJC-1295, GHRP-6, GHRP-2 and selective androgen receptor modulators (SARMs))
- **Melanotan I and II** (tanning product)
- **'Site enhancement liquids or oils'** (i.e. Synthol, silicone)

Methodology

Months 1-36

1. Literature Review
2. IDUHED website launch
3. Monitoring of several key websites, discussion forums, cyberpharmacies
4. online survey (n=1000)

Months 6-14

In depth Interviewing with users to investigate: how the injecting use of HEDs is socially organised and to examine the experiences and risk negotiation of users

Months 18-24

Thematic findings will be plotted against theories of **risk decision making**, emergent injecting habitus and negotiation of **subcultural and cyber** environments

Open Research Data

- This study is unique and has not been done before. It will generate new data which will be disseminated as follows:
- A dedicated IDUHED project website targeting lay public and HED users
- A series of concise and clearly written fact-sheets for the general public will be prepared on research findings as they arise, giving information on harm and risks to users.
- Peer reviewed articles in high indexed health, drug and sporting journals
- Monthly snapshots identifying HED products sold and profile of users through the project website
- Oral/poster presentation of study findings at National and International Conferences.



This study is funded by the Irish Research Council
Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme

Contact rebekahbrennan@live.ie
Supervisor Professor John Wells
Co-Supervisor Dr. Marie Claire Van Hout