

# A qualitative examination of athletes' willingness to dope: a choice or imperative?

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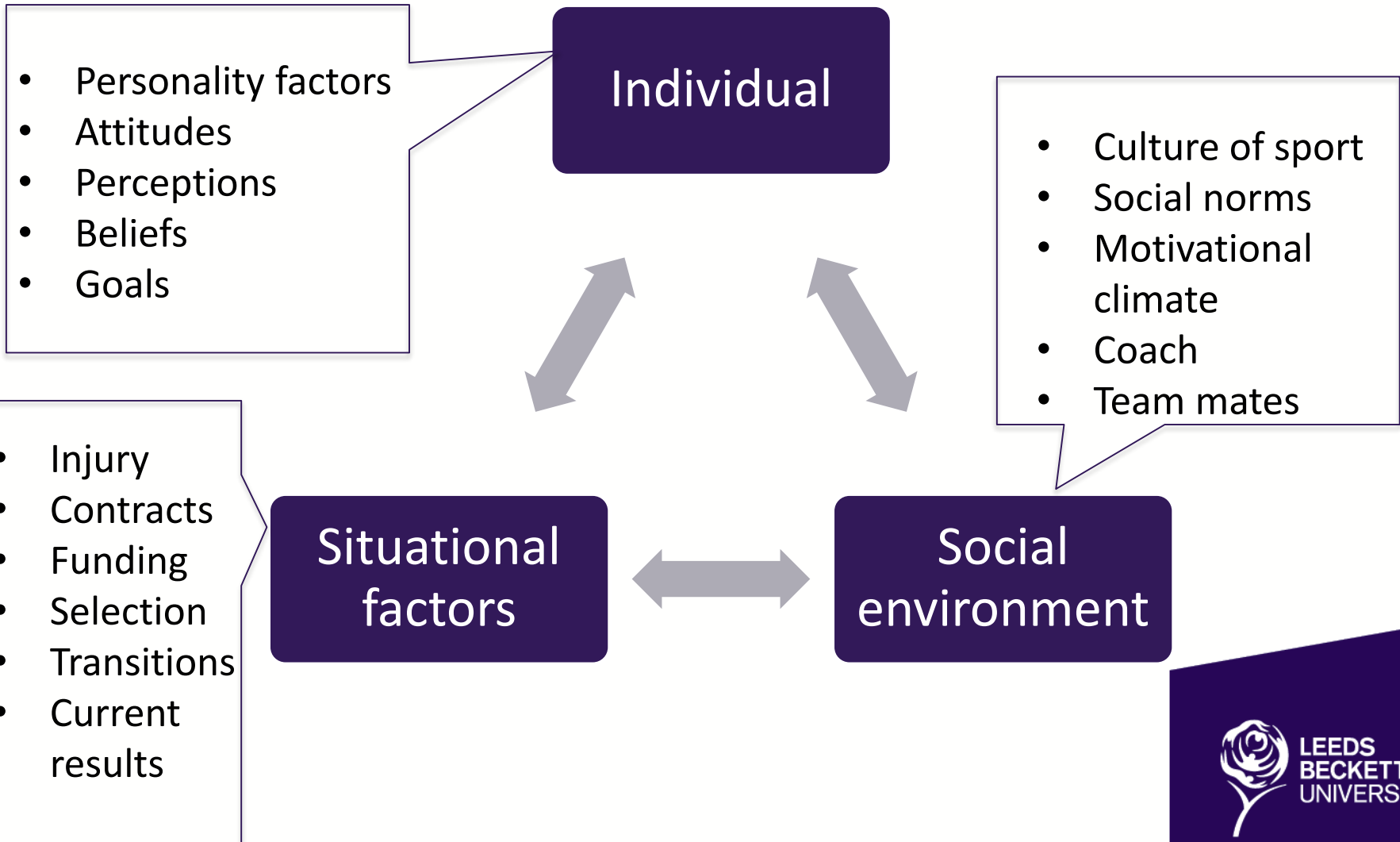


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# Doping is a complex behaviour



# Doping is a complex behaviour

Just because some people make bad choices doesn't mean they are bad people.

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Athletes who dope are not necessarily 'bad people' looking to cheat



# Personal experiences of national level athletes

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5 male (mean age= 29)



2 male, 2 female  
(mean age= 20.5)

Athletes' beliefs and perceptions of



to dope

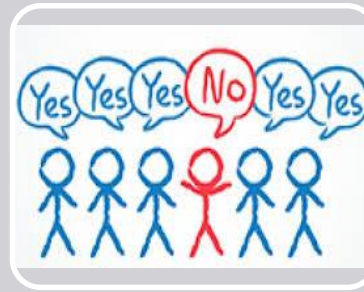
# Willingness to dope



“They don’t have a choice if they want to remain in the sport”



“Suffering an injury may tip them over the edge”



“They are under pressure from those around them to dope”



“They think everyone else is doing it”

Factors perceived to influence willingness to dope

# They don't have a choice...

Charlie: "If you've had a goal all your life to get Olympic gold and you've dedicated the last 25 years of your life to trying to get it, some people just can't let go and accept defeat... they have to do something about it and take drugs"



# Occupational necessity



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Charlie (A) believed that money can “blur people’s vision”

Gemma: “It’s so competitive to try and get funding, you have to be one of the top in your sport... It (athletics) does get quite expensive so I can see people going down the route of drugs just to get funding”





# Occupational necessity

Charlie: "You've got to be the fastest, throw the furthest, jump the highest and you can't come into a competition under peak level because you will lose... It's a big pressure, you've got to be competing at your best all the time".

Nathan: "They might feel that they need to take the drugs to get invited to big competitions".



# Occupational necessity

Harry: "That's probably one thing that people don't realise is that even though it is a dream to compete at, it becomes a job, it becomes a hassle. You're worried about your views you, whether the lads are on pay as they don't play, they're not doing anything and struggle to pay their mortgage"

Simon: If players are not performing, they may be "dropped by the coach"

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# Occupational necessity

Simon: “You’re looking at contracts every two or three years if you want to stay at this good level of salary... to a Super League player it might be everything he’s got [his rugby career] so he wants to make as much as he can”.



# Occupational necessity

Charlie: "It's quite hard for people to transfer into normal work... it's hard for an athlete to realise that their sport is not everything in the world... if it's everything to you and you're not doing it... people don't think it's worth living".

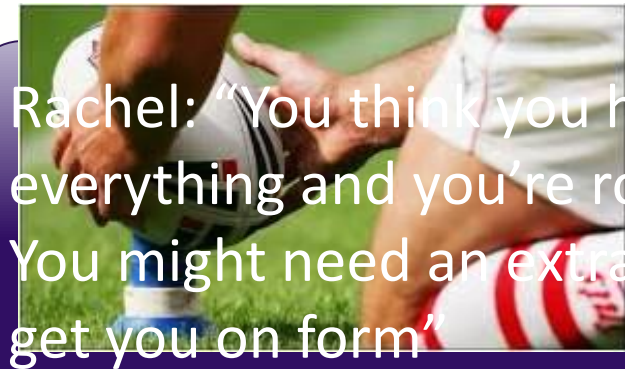


Harry: "Last chance saloon"

Alex: "If he lacks qualifications, he's going to be worried"



# Suffering an injury



Rachel: "You think you have lost everything and you're rock bottom. You might need an extra boost to get you on form"

Jack- Injuries are common

Harry- "Demons in your head" affect confidence during injury and "make you think you will never reach the level you were at before injury".

Nathan: "If they [athletes] do not get over the injury fast enough they might have gone past their peak"

# Under pressure from others

Charlie: “It is the coach approaching the athletes and offering them PES”

Nathan: “If the coach thinks it’s going to be an aid for them to use, then the training group would probably use it”.



# Under pressure from others

Ben: They would “egg each other on”.



Harry: “Acting like sheep and following the shepherd”

# Everyone else is doing it

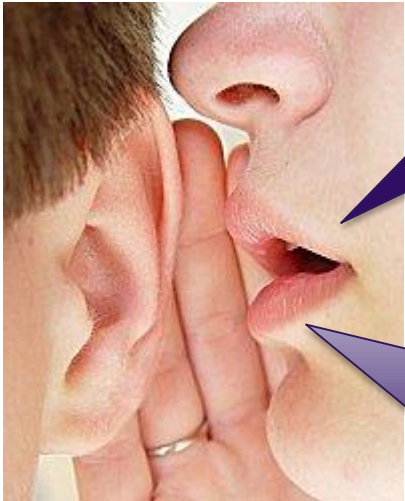


Nathan: “They are cheating so the only way I’m going to be able to compete with them is if I cheat as well”.

Charlie: “You see it as more normal if you’re with a group and they’re all on drugs. It’s more acceptable...”



# Rumours and hearsay



Harry: "I've heard lads from other teams say that they've been tested on it [HGH] even blood and it was only days after and they got away with it so as soon as that rumour starts circulating, everyone thinks they can do it..."

Simon: "You hear a lot of rumours. Obviously there's a lot of gossip and stuff and friends of friends who've played with this guy before".

# Family protection

Ben: "I think mostly your parents would be trying to keep you safe"

Nathan: "They might say they will support him so that even if his funding does get terminated, he can still train with their support."



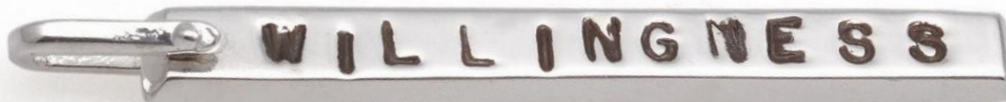
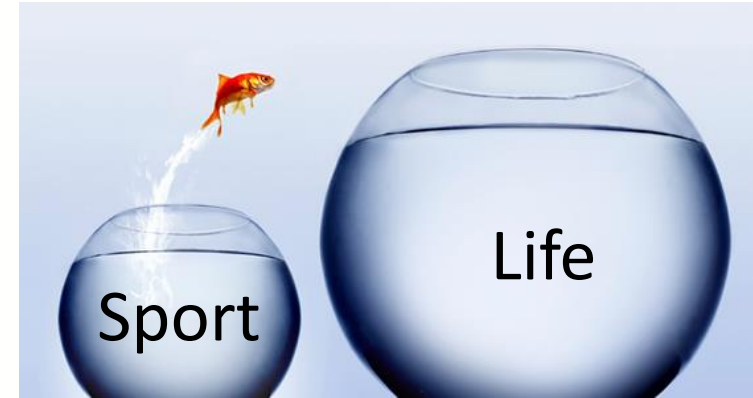
Emily: "I can't imagine a family would be promoting someone to take drugs"

Harry: "It doesn't matter as long as you give your all and give your best..."

# Protective factors



# To summarise



# Preventing willingness to dope



Dual careers can enable individuals to pursue their sporting talent whilst also preparing them for a career once they retire (EU Expert Group “Education & Training in Sport”, 2012)

# Preventing willingness to dope

Help athletes to develop key life skills:



# Preventing willingness to dope



Increase access to resources



**Thank you for listening**

**Any questions**



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