

MSA NEWSLINE

Up-to-date Information on Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development



Initiative Aims to Educate Public about Dangers of Anabolic Steroid Use



Anabolic Steroids

Anabolic steroids are substances that are related to the male sex hormones called androgens. They promote the growth of skeletal muscle called the anabolic effect, and the development of male sexual characteristics called androgenic effects.

They are used by doctors to treat people whose bodies produce abnormally low amounts of testosterone, such as delayed puberty and some types of impotence. Anabolic steroids are also used to treat body wasting in patients with AIDS and other diseases.

Anabolic steroids are available in the United States by prescription only. Anabolic steroid abusers get their drugs from clandestine laboratories, smuggled from other countries, or diverted illegally from U.S. pharmacies.

Steroid use can Cause Irreversible Biological Effects

Recent data from NIDA's Monitoring the Future Survey shows that teenagers' use and attitudes about anabolic steroids are going in a negative direction. According to NIDA, more than half a million 8th and 10th grade students are currently using anabolic steroids, along with a rising number of high school seniors who do not think the drugs are dangerous.

Anabolic steroids are synthetic compounds that mimic the action of testosterone. Results from research have shown that anabolic steroid use in adolescents can stop bone growth and has been associated with damage to the heart. In males, steroid use has been shown to cause shrunken testicles, impotence, and breast enlargement. In females, anabolic steroids can effect menstruation, cause growth of body hair, loss of scalp hair, a deepened voice and reduction in breast size. In both males and females, many of the biological effects are irreversible. According to NIDA, use of anabolic steroids has also been linked to increased and unpredictable levels of aggression in humans and animals.

NIDA has started an initiative aimed at making people aware of the dangers of anabolic steroid use. This includes a new Web site- www.steroidabuse.org- which provides science-based information to its visitors. NIDA and its partners, which include the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Sports Medicine, The National Association of School Nurses, the National Federation of High Schools and International Students in Action

Anabolic steroids can be taken orally as tablets or capsules, or by ointment rubbed in the skin. Doses taken by abusers can be up to 100 times more than the doses taken for medical conditions.

In most cases, steroid abuse is caused by a desire to build muscles and improve sports performance. Some individuals are also motivated by erroneous perceptions of their bodies.

- Info received from NIDA Community Drug Alert Bulletin- Anabolic Steroids.

will distribute 250,000 copies of a special community drug alert bulletin on anabolic steroid abuse. In addition, they will also place 500,000 colorful postcards with messages about the harmful effects of steroid abuse, called "art cards," in gyms, bookstores, restaurants, and clubs in Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Miami, Baltimore, Seattle, and Indianapolis. They hope that this effort will reach and educate the public about the dangers associated with anabolic steroid use.

Patrick, Zickler (2000). NIDA initiative Targets Increasing Teen Use of Anabolic Steroids. NIDA NOTES, 15(3), 1 6-7

For further information regarding this article please contact Jaclyn M. Cheek at the Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development Project, Emory University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, 1256 Briarcliff Road, N.E., Suite 324W, Atlanta, Georgia, 30306. You can also phone us at 404-712-9800 or visit our website at <http://www.emory.edu/MSACD>

NEWSLINE Editor: Jaclyn M. Cheek

Contributing Author: Jaclyn M. Cheek



Maternal Substance Abuse and
Child Development Project
1256 Briarcliff Rd., NE Suite 323W
Emory West Campus
Atlanta, GA 30306

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