

# Résumé ARAMIS

## ***SUBSTANCE USE AMONG SPORTIVE ADOLESCENTS IN THE FRENCH-SPEAKING PART OF SWITZERLAND***

### ***Background***

For various reasons, adults in general and parents in particular believe that sports practice is a protective factor against risky behaviors such as substance use among adolescents. However, the evidence from the literature is inconclusive on the subject. The main objective of our study was therefore to compare the prevalence of use of psychoactive (both legal and illegal) and performance-enhancing/doping substances between youth aged 16-20 years practicing sports (SA) and those not practicing sports (NSA) in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

### ***Methods***

Using several recruiting methods, both SA and NSA were invited to answer an anonymous online questionnaire about their substance use. Psychoactive substances included in our research were tobacco, alcohol, cannabis and other illegal substances. Doping was limited to the wish of enhancing performance while using prohibited products that were on the 2009 World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) list. Various sorts of ordinary pharmacology consumption have also been analyzed. During 2009, over a 10 months period, a total of 1303 online questionnaires were completed. From the final weighted sample, 1247 eligible subjects were available for statistical analyses.

### ***Results and related conclusions***

Overall, the protective effect of sports practice against the use of psychoactive substances depends on the substance.

- NSA are more likely to smoke than SA, and, among the latter, those in leisure sports contexts are more likely to smoke than those in competition.
- On the contrary, no differences in alcohol misuse were observed between SA and NSA adolescents, indicating that sports practice is not a protective factor against alcohol misuse.
- Although NSA are twice more likely to be current cannabis users than SA, one out of every 9 of the latter has nevertheless used it in the last month.

Three quarters of surveyed SA reported active use of performance-enhancing products, confirming the growing trend for their consumption.

- Among the substances used to enhance sports performance, caffeinated products, sports drinks and nutritional supplements were the three most reported.
- Few SA reported using substances from the WADA listing. Cannabis was the most reported of such banned products.
- Among SA, those in competitive practice were more likely to use performance-enhancing products than those practicing sports for leisure purposes.

Moreover,

- A link between psychoactive and performance-enhancing substances seems to exist as all adolescents reporting either smoking, having misused alcohol recently or currently using cannabis reported higher proportions of doping substance consumption. The use of cannabis as a way to enhance sports performance among its recreational users seems quite frequent.
- Among sportive adolescents, those competing at the international level showed lower rates of alcohol misuse and cannabis use, but compared to those competing at the regional level, not of tobacco smoking.