

Counterfeit Analysis Report

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Anabolic Research Update:

By William Llewellyn

Counterfeit Analysis Report

This month, I'd like to take another look at the quality of anabolic steroid products and ancillary drugs on the black market. As anyone who studies the illicit anabolic steroid trade knows, high demand and huge profits offer strong incentive for the manufacture of counterfeit drugs. Over the years, this segment of the illegal business has grown exponentially. What was once a problem largely isolated to the United States, counterfeit steroids can now be found in literally every corner of the globe. Counterfeiting is a phenomenon not isolated to anabolic steroids, of course, and is commonly seen when the significant sales of anything valuable are diverted from legitimate to underground sources. Given the nature of drug products, however, the counterfeit steroid phenomenon is an especially important health concern to drug-using bodybuilders. As the number of these products grows, so too does the number of reports of low or no product efficacy, or worse—health consequences including abscess, infection, anaphylaxis and heavy metal contamination.

Whenever analysis studies come along that offer us a small cross-sectional view of what is being actively traded (and consumed) on the black market, I always like to report on them. This month, we have the opportunity to review a particular good report from Germany. It covers the analysis of 70 different anabolic steroids and ancillary drug products at the Center for Preventative Doping Research in Cologne. All of the samples analyzed in this report were obtained during police raids of three illegal dealers of anabolic steroids. While this is not a set of tests from the United States (where most readers of this column reside), I believe the results are still very relevant, especially when you consider that Western Europe is known for less stringent controls and the greater availability of legitimate steroid drugs than the United States. In other words, the results should have been at least as bad had they been conducted in the United States.

The Results

Included in this article are the results of the study separated by drug type. I felt upon review that it allowed a somewhat interesting view of the "relative confidence" one could have for a particular type of steroid or drug, at least according to the numbers in this small report. It is important to emphasize that while a fairly large sample for this type of analysis, 70 drug products taken from three dealers is not sufficient to prove any specific market trend, overall counterfeit prevalence or brand legitimacy. Still, as we find in the results, counterfeiting is still very much alive and well and is an issue Germans have to deal with just as do Americans.

Anadrol (oxymetholone):

1. Oxytone 50mg (SB Labs, Thailand) Result: PASS
2. Oxytone 50mg (SB Labs, Thailand) Result: PASS
3. Oxytone 50mg (SB Labs, Thailand) Result: PASS

Deca (nandrolone decanoate):

1. Norma Hellas (100mg/mL) Result: FAIL (testosterone)
2. Norma Hellas (100mg/mL) Result: FAIL (testosterone)
3. Norma Hellas (100mg/mL) Result: FAIL (testosterone)
4. Norma Hellas (100mg/mL) Result: FAIL (testosterone)
5. Decabol 250 (British Dragon, Underground) Result: FAIL (testosterone)

Dianabol (methandrostenolone):

1. Anabol 5mg (British Dispensary, Thailand) Result: FAIL (methyltestosterone)
2. Anabol 5mg (British Dispensary, Thailand) Result: PASS
3. Anabol 5mg (British Dispensary, Thailand) Result: PASS
4. Danabol DS 10mg (March, Thailand) Result: PASS
5. Danabol DS 10mg (March, Thailand) Result: PASS
6. Naposim 5mg (Terapia, Romania) Result: FAIL (methyltestosterone)

Equipoise (boldenone undecylenate):

1. Boldabol 200 (British Dragon, Underground) Result: PASS

Halotestin (fluoxymesterone):

1. Fluoxymesterone (IP, Underground) Result: PASS

Primobolan (methenolone enanthate):

1. Primobol 100 (British Dragon, Underground) Result: FAIL (nandrolone, testosterone)

Proviron (mesterolone):

1. Proviron 25mg Result: PASS

Sustanon 250 (testosterone mix):

1. Sustanon 250 (Karachi, Pakistan) Result: PASS
2. Sustanon 250 (Nile, Egypt) Result: FAIL (different testosterone)
3. Sustanon 250 (Nile, Egypt) Result: FAIL (different testosterone)
4. Sustanon 250 (Karachi, Pakistan) Result: PASS
5. Sustanon 250 (Karachi, Pakistan) Result: PASS
6. Sustanon 250 (Karachi, Pakistan) Result: PASS
7. Sustanon 250 (Karachi, Pakistan) Result: PASS
8. Sustanon 250 (Karachi, Pakistan) Result: PASS
9. Sustanon 250 (Karachi, Pakistan) Result: PASS

Testosterone Cypionate:

1. Testex Prolongatum 125 (Q Pharma, Spain) Result: PASS
2. Testabol 200 (British Dragon, Underground) Result: FAIL (different testosterone)

Testosterone Enanthate:

1. Testofort 250mg/mL (Pliva, Pakistan) Result: PASS
2. Testosterone Depot 250 (Eifelfango, Germany) Result: PASS
3. Testosterone Depot 250 (Eifelfango, Germany) Result: PASS
4. Testoviron Depot 250 (Medipharm, Pakistan) Result: PASS
5. Testoviron Depot 250 (Medipharm, Pakistan) Result: PASS
6. Cidoteston 250 (CID, Egypt) Result: FAIL (includes T. cypionate)
7. Cidoteston 250 (CID, Egypt) Result: PASS

Testosterone Propionate:

1. Testovis 100mg/mL (SIT, Italy) Result: PASS
2. Testovis 100mg/mL (SIT, Italy) Result: PASS
3. Testovis 100mg/mL (SIT, Italy) Result: PASS
4. Testovis 100mg/mL (SIT, Italy) Result: PASS
5. Testovis 100mg/mL (SIT, Italy) Result: PASS
6. Testabol (British Dragon, Underground) Result: FAIL (different testosterones)

Trenbolone (various esters):

1. Trenabol 75 (British Dragon, Underground) Result: FAIL (boldenone, testosterone)
2. Trenabol 100 (British Dragon, Underground) Result: FAIL (boldenone, testosterone)
3. Tri-Trenabol 150 (British Dragon, Underground) Result: FAIL (trenbolone, testosterone)
4. Trenabol 200 (British Dragon, Underground) Result: FAIL (trenbolone, testosterone)

Winstrol (stanozolol):

1. Winstrol Depot 50mg/mL (Zambon, Spain) Result: PASS

2. Winstrol Depot 50mg/mL (Zambon, Spain) Result: PASS
3. Winstrol Depot 50mg/mL (Zambon, Spain) Result: PASS
4. Stanabol 50 (British Dragon, Underground) Result: PASS

Visual Inspection

The researchers noted that aside from known underground products from labs such as British Dragon and International Pharmaceuticals, it was not possible for them to ascertain what product was real and what was a counterfeit upon visual inspection. While this group may not have the experience or reference materials necessary to make an up-close product examination and no product photos were provided in the report to reference, it does underline a problem that we have been noticing for a long time. Namely, that counterfeit manufacturing operations are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Now more than ever, it can be extremely difficult for someone shopping on the black market to determine product legitimacy before making a purchase and actually consuming the product(s).

Underground Steroid Products

Of the 10 samples of British Dragon (BD) products taken from one dealer, only two were shown to contain the labeled ingredients upon analysis. None of the samples, however, were shown to be devoid of steroid ingredients. Instead, there appeared to be a trend of substituting expensive ingredients for less costly ones. For example, all of the trenbolone products failed the testing, usually because they contained a base of testosterone instead of trenbolone. Since these all originated from one dealer and BD has been the subject of much recent counterfeiting and internal instability, it is impossible to determine if these had originated from the actual manufacturer. IP (international Pharmaceuticals) is the only other company identified as an underground operation during this testing and only their fluoxymesterone steroid was analyzed. It contained the properly labeled ingredient.

The "Best" Products

In general, of the confiscated German products, those that were manufactured in Western Europe seemed to offer greater assurance of legitimacy than those of other regions. This is in great contrast to the United States, where local region products (U.S. and Canada) are those most likely to be the subject of counterfeiting. Also, the less costly testosterone products were the most likely to be legitimate overall, even if they originated outside of Europe. It appears that at least by way of these three dealers, a good deal of legitimate Karachi Sustanon and Egyptian Testosterone enanthate is being imported. It is of note that the one failure of CID enanthate was due to the inclusion of some testosterone cypionate in addition to the labeled enanthate. It is unknown if this is an error that occurred at the manufacturing plant, or the product was the subject of counterfeiting. Thailand also remains a common source country for legitimate products not commonly manufactured in Western Europe, including oxymetholone and methandrostenolone.

The "Worst" Products

Perhaps due to high recognition and demand, all of the Normal Hellas tested during this analysis run was determined to be counterfeit. Note that Norma Hellas Deca products were confiscated and analyzed from all three dealers, not one single source. In all cases, these products contained testosterone, likely in lower than the stated amount of nandrolone. This can provide a similar level of mild effect for some users in the hopes it will not be identified as such. It is also less

expensive to manufacture in comparison to nandrolone decanoate. Norma Hellas Deca, likewise, remains a product of extremely high risk on the European and international markets.

Other Bodybuilding & Ancillary Drugs

A total of 20 non-steroid drugs were also tested. All products that would be defined as common ancillary drugs including tamoxifen citrate (Nolvadex), clomiphene citrate (Clomid), thyroid hormone, caffeine and yohimbine hcl turned out to be legitimate. This underlines the lower risk in these items, no doubt due to the lower financial incentive for counterfeiters to duplicate these cheap and easy to access pharmaceuticals. The only non-steroid drugs where there was some substitution noted were in the male sexual performance category, where drugs such as Viagra and Cialis dominate. In most cases, these drugs did test out as labeled and when they failed, it was for the substitution of active ingredients of the same drug family.

Overall, nearly 40 percent of the anabolic steroids tested turn out to be counterfeits. This is pretty much in line with what would have been expected. Certainly counterfeit drugs do not have total control of the illicit market and as we can see, many legitimate drugs are still distributed in large volume. At the same time, however, counterfeits made up a very substantial (approaching half) percentage of what was being circulated by these three dealers. This is likely a good reflection of what is happening on the general European market. Of course, this also is a reflection of the global counterfeiting problem, which is showing no signs of waning. If nothing else, I hope this article serves to underline the care that should be taken when shopping for these drugs on the black market. It is a big dice role these days, especially if you do not take care to really learn what you should (and should not) be shopping for. Be safe!