

# Androgens In The News

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By now, I'm sure you've seen the clips of "Bigger, Stronger, Faster" by Christopher Bell, director of the highly acclaimed steroid documentary. What's fascinating about this discussion is the fact that in my opinion, politicians and the general public will never accept the fact that anabolic steroids can indeed be used safely (with a minimal of side effects). And that's based on science, not hearsay. But who needs science when the general public can be duped into believing all sorts of silly things about steroids?

Here is an excerpt from an interview posted at MesoRx on mesomorphosis.com.

My commentary follows. Perhaps the most telling of the interview questions is this: Do you think that anabolic steroids represent a public health crisis? How dangerous are steroids? Mr. Bell's answer:

(shortened for brevity) The drugs themselves have been shown to be fairly safe. What's funny about steroids is that we try to lump them together as one big thing. But you know as well as I do that there are over 200 different types of steroids. You have Anadrol, Anavar, Winstrol, Dianabol, Primobolan, blah, blah, blah—the list goes on and on. And so you can't say that Halotestin and Anavar—which are two oral steroids—are the same. They are not. It's like comparing cocaine to ephedrine. They kind of do the same thing. But they're not the same. You have one drug that is pretty mild like Anavar and you have another drug that is very liver-toxic like Halotestin that could also produce a helluva lot of strength gains. That also presents another question. In America we are allowed to do a lot of things that can hurt us. We are allowed to bungee jump; we are allowed to black-diamond ski; we are allowed to get plastic surgery. I can get fake breasts put in as a man or a woman. I can get buttock augmentation. I can get my lips done. My nose done. My ears done. Whatever I want in order to look good. But if I want to ingest steroids to look good, then that becomes illegal.

The latter reference to cosmetic surgery is a telling point.

Why is taking a drug (androgens) considered bad for the purposes of gaining muscle and losing fat (aghast!), while it's OK for the medical establishment to slice, dice, chop and suck various tissues of your body in the hopes that you'll transform that flabby body into buns of steel? Heck, you can get fake pec implants to make the chest look bigger, but God forbid you take low-dose androgens, work out like a maniac and get big pec muscles. Oh yeah, that's cheating.

What folks do in sports (i.e., if it is illegal and against the rules of the sport) is completely unrelated to what a consenting adult does in the privacy of his or her home. To confuse the two is intellectual dishonesty at best and complete idiocy at worst.

## Weight Loss Bad For Testosterone

To investigate the effects of a rapid weight-reduction program under authentic pre-competition conditions, 18 elite wrestlers were studied with dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) before and after two to three weeks of weight-reduction regimens. The average weight loss was 8.2 percent and was from a drop in both fat mass of 16 percent and lean body mass of 8 percent. The rapid weight reduction caused a significant 63 percent decrease in serum testosterone and luteinizing hormone (-54 percent) concentrations. Statistically, they found a reduced bodyweight correlated with decreased serum testosterone concentration. So what does this mean? Well, think of it. If you're one of those people who goes through rapid periods of weight loss, you ultimately may be doing more harm than good. For physique athletes, slow and gradual weight loss is best.

## Ginkgo Enhances Testosterone Secretion

And I always thought Ginkgo was for the brain. Scientists looked at the effects of Ginkgo biloba extract (EGB) on the testosterone synthesis in the Leydig cells of type 2 diabetic rats. The Leydig cells (same in humans) make testosterone (T). Thirty male rats were equally randomized into a normal control, a type 2 diabetic and an EGB group. Compared with the normal control, there was a significant decrease in the number and volume of Leydig cells, the levels of serum LH (luteinizing hormone) and T in the type 2 diabetes group. Compared with the type 2 diabetes group, 12 weeks of EGB treatment caused very slight pathological changes in the Leydig cells, and significantly increased the concentrations of blood LH and T. So there you have it; EGB enhances testosterone synthesis and secretion of Leydig cells in type 2 diabetic rats. Now, it didn't affect the normal rats. However, this is intriguing in that humans with type 2 diabetes may indeed have another reason to try Ginkgo!

## Caffeine And Testosterone

I love caffeine! Besides creatine, there's nothing that has more supportive data. In this study, investigators examined the acute effects of caffeine on the exercise-associated increases in testosterone and cortisol in a double-blind crossover study. They took 24 rugby players who ingested caffeine doses of zero, 200, 400 and 800mg in random order 1 hour before a resistance-exercise session. They found that testosterone concentration showed a small increase of 15 percent during exercise. Caffeine raised this concentration in a dose-dependent manner by 21 percent at the highest dose. The 800mg dose also produced a moderate 52 percent (+/- 44 percent) increase in cortisol. The effect of caffeine on the testosterone:cortisol ratio was a small decline (14 percent). So what does this mean? The authors felt that caffeine has some potential to benefit training outcomes via the anabolic effects of the increase in testosterone concentration, but this benefit might be counteracted by the opposing catabolic effects of the increase in cortisol and resultant

decline in the testosterone:cortisol ratio. I would suggest, however, that because caffeine helps you train harder, it doesn't matter what the short-term effect is on the T:C ratio.

## GH And Testosterone Good For Muscle

GH versus T. Which is better? Well, it depends on whom you give it to. Let's look at older men. In a six-month randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, 21 healthy, elderly men aged 65 to 75 were studied. Participants either received a placebo, GH or T. They discovered that blood IGF-1 levels increased significantly with GH and GH + T combo compared to placebo. T increased significantly only in the T group. Mid-thigh muscle mass and VO2 max increased with GH + T only. Thus, this study showed that six months of treatment with low-dose GH alone or with T in healthy, elderly men produces comparable increments in whole-body protein turnover and protein synthesis. So perhaps for your grandpa, have him visit his local smart doc and if he's low in T and GH, the dynamic combination of the two might just be the right prescription.

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