

PREVALENCE OF PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING
DRUG USE AMONG GYM MEMBERS:
A Cross-sectional Survey
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AIMS:
In this study, we aimed to examine the prevalence of illicit and performance-enhancing drug (PED) use among amateur athletes, to identify the common characteristics and associated risk factors for illicit performance-enhancing drug use, and to measure the perception and awareness among Gym members regarding the safety and effects of illicit drug use.




METHODS:
This cross-sectional study was conducted among adult male and female gym center attendees in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Self-administered Arabic and English questionnaires were used for data collection, and SPSS version 26 was used to perform t- and chi-square tests.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION:

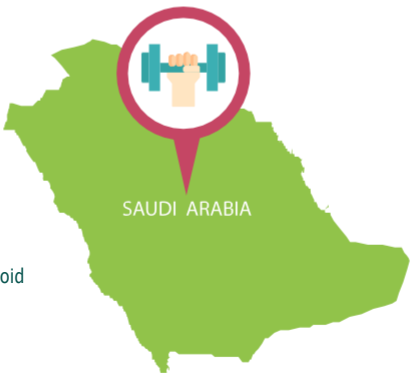
 This study included **379 PARTICIPANTS**

 **59.6%** were male | **52.8%** 26 and 35 years of age


 **47.5%** normal BMI | **40.9%** overweight BMI


Our study revealed a high prevalence (48.5%) of PED use among gym athletes in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the true prevalence might have been higher due to the possibility of underreporting by some participants because of the sensitivity of the subject.

Protein powder was the most commonly used type of PED.



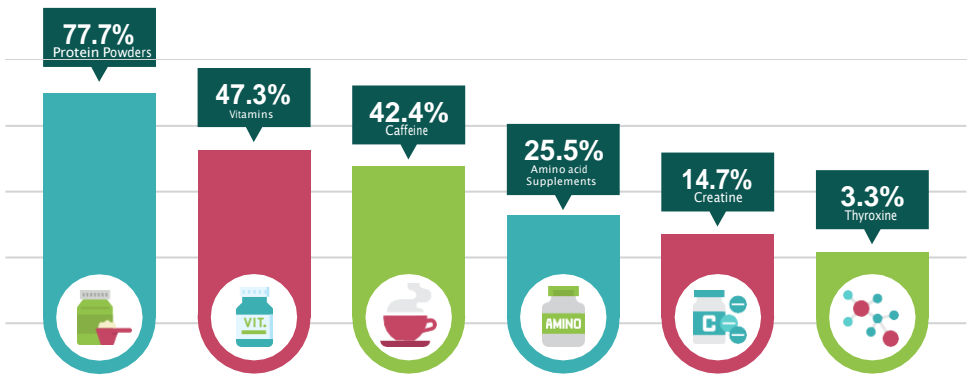
The results of this study should encourage public health researchers and health advocates to design and implement behavioral interventions through media campaigns and other means to educate the public on the benefits, risks and contraindications of dietary supplements used by athletes to enhance their body performance.

 **22.3%** reported anabolic androgenic steroid use.

 Side effects of PEDs were observed in **19% OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS.**

Keywords: dietary supplements, body performance, performance-enhancing drugs, athletes, exercise, supplements

Our study showed that the prevalence of PED use among athletes attending the gym was 48.5%, among which



Anabolic steroids were used in 22.3% of our study population.

Sources of information for most PED users are unreliable and usually include



46.7%
Personal trainers



32.6%
Web search



21.2%
Friends



17.4%
Physician or nutritionist

Table 1. Socio-demographic and training-related characteristics of the participants.

Variable	Frequency (N=379)	Percent (%)
SEX		
Male	256	59.6
Female	153	40.4
AGE GROUP		
25 years	94	24.8
26–35 years	200	52.8
36 years	85	22.4
USE OF PEDS		
Yes	184	48.5
No	195	51.5

Table 2. PED-related perception and awareness among the gym participants using PEDs.

Variable	Frequency (N=184)	Percent (%)
TYPE OF PED USED		
Protein powders	143	77.7
Amino acid	47	25.5
AAS	41	22.3
Vitamins	87	47.3
Creatine	27	14.7
Caffeine	78	42.4
Thyroxine	6	3.3