

# **A systematic review investigating the psychosocial factors influencing initiation, use, and subjective experience of performance and image-enhancing drugs (PIEDs) in female weight-training populations**

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**Introduction and Aims:** Research into performance-and-image enhancing drug (PIED) use and the subsequent development of harm-reduction measures, has overwhelmingly focussed on male populations. Despite this, recent data suggests that use of PIEDs is on the rise among females.

In this study, we systematically reviewed the existing literature on the topic to explore (i) the predictors of PIED initiation among female weight-training populations and (ii) the relationship between different psychosocial phenomena and weight-training females' use of PIEDs, at various stages of use.

**Method:** A mixed-methods systematic review of relevant literature was conducted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA). A targeted search strategy, using combinations of key words, was developed and databased searched included: PubMed, PsycInfo, CINAHL, Scopus- Web of Science. Supplementary articles were also included by hand-searching key journals and reference

**Results:** 5159 studies were identified by a systematic literature search. Following screening, selection and evaluation of relevant studies, thematic synthesis will be used to determine the key analytical themes emerging as they relate to this review's aims.

**Discussion and Conclusions:** This review will increase our understanding of PIED use in women and inform the directions for future research. If there are, in fact, unique psychosocial factors that are present in the initiation and overall experiences of PIEDs for female weight-training athletes, this would suggest that there needs to be unique harm reduction, intervention and education tools, catered specifically for the needs of this population.

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