

Who Guards the Guardians?— The Use of Anabolic-Androgenic Steroids by Law Enforcement Officers

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For many years, physical strength has been considered an advantage by law enforcement officers. Sometimes, the lives of such people depend on their strength and they are often interested in ways to increase this particular aspect of their physical fitness. For this reason, weight training is popular

among law enforcement officers as a form of recreational activity since it is known to be an effective means of increasing size and strength.

However, as the use of steroids in the U.S. has increased to the point that an estimated 2,000,000 males take them on a regular basis, it appears that a proportional increase has also taken place among law enforcement officers, who use these substances because of the widely accepted fact that steroids, when accompanied by weight training and an adequate diet, increase muscular bulk and power.

In 1986, Dr. Robert Kerr said in a deposition that he had written approximately 500 anabolic steroid prescriptions for "peace officers" in the greater Los Angeles area. In 1987, Freddy Gasca, a former Miami policeman who was fired because he refused to submit to a unanalysis following an incident in which he was accused of using excessive force during an arrest, stated that between 40 and 60 policemen in his department used steroids. In 1987, Vincent Bovino, a policeman in Nassau County, on Long Island, testified that at least 12 policemen on his small force took steroids. In 1987, seven Texas State Troopers were disciplined by their superiors for having used and sold anabolic steroids. In 1988, an informant in the Chesapeake area of Virginia told a state attorney that "at least 60 policemen" in that metropolitan area ingested and injected these drugs.

For years, people close to high performance sport have made the empirical observation that anabolic steroids produce aggressive and hostile behavior in those who use them. In 1987 a study was published by Dr. William Taylor indicating an increase of aggressiveness in 90% of the subjects who used steroids and in 1988 a study was published by Drs. Harrison Pope and Howard Katz indicating that steroids could produce in increased aggressiveness and manic behavior in those who used them.

Important public policy questions are raised by the fact that many law enforcement officials are now using a male hormone which causes them to be more aggressive and volatile. A secondary concern is that a police force which has within it a number of steroid users is poorly equipped to investigate illegal steroid use by the public.