

# ACMD

## Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

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Secretary: Will Reynolds

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8<sup>th</sup> February 2012

Dear Minister,

### **Re: Further advice on the classification of 2 steroidal substances**

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) is writing further to its advice of 10 November 2011 – its consideration of the anabolic steroids: 7-hydroxy DHEA (7-hydroxy-dehydroepiandrosterone) and 7-keto DHEA (7-keto-dehydroepiandrosterone). Both compounds are metabolites of DHEA (prasterone, dehydroepiandrosterone). This advice was provided in response to a commitment the ACMD made to Ministers to review the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) list of compounds.

Since the ACMD provided its advice of 10 November 2011 it has received evidence from a US Pharmaceutical Corporation that 7-Keto DHEA and 7-hydroxy DHEA, cannot be described as anabolic agents. It is understood that the pharmaceutical company has developed a weight loss supplement containing 7-keto DHEA. It has provided a number of peer review papers that it considers support its concerns that the compounds recommended for control are not anabolic agents, in addition submitting a substantial body of its own research. It has also provided evidence supporting its use as a dietary supplement.

Following this communication, the ACMD has undertaken further research into the evidence base. As part of this work the ACMD has returned to WADA for clarification of its classification of 7-Keto DHEA and 7-hydroxy DHEA as Androgenic Anabolic Steroids (when administered exogenously).

WADA has now explained to the ACMD that the classification of these substances as anabolic agents was primarily since they are metabolites of DHEA therefore

structurally similar. The classification was, however, not because of any known, intrinsic, anabolic properties. The ACMD is aware that these substances are sold as dietary supplements or added to dietary supplements with some claims that they increase muscle mass.

It is important to note that it is often difficult to determine whether a steroid exerts anabolic activity. In this sense, anabolic steroids are a special case. The ACMD's further evidence and consideration gathering leads it to the conclusion that it cannot describe these products as anabolic agents.

Therefore, in the light of this further evidence and consideration the ACMD does not consider that the likely harms of the compounds 7-hydroxy DHEA (7-hydroxy-dehydroepiandrosterone) and 7-keto DHEA (7-keto-dehydroepiandrosterone) warrant inclusion in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

The ACMD has not taken this decision lightly. It is of the highest importance that, to preserve the integrity of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the ACMD acts upon the evidence base available and continues to provide Ministers with the best advice possible. I would therefore welcome a conversation should you wish to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Les Iversen".

**Professor Les Iversen**  
**Chairman**

cc. Anne Milton - Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department of Health