



Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

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Secretary: Will Reynolds

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Minister of State for Crime Prevention and ASB reduction
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
3rd Floor Peel Building
London
SW1A 4DF

10th November 2011

Dear Minister,

Re: Advice on the classification of 2 steroidal substances

I am writing to provide you with the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs' (ACMD) consideration of the anabolic steroids: 7-hydroxy DHEA (7-hydroxy-dehydroepiandrosterone) and 7-keto DHEA (7-keto-dehydroepiandrosterone). These compounds are metabolites of DHEA (prasterone, dehydroepiandrosterone).

Anabolic steroids are synthetic substances which are related to the male sex hormones, particularly testosterone. These substances have a number of physiological effects, most notably anabolic effects (such as growth of skeletal muscle and bone) and androgenic effects (the differentiation, growth and maintenance of the reproductive system and sexual characteristics in males). The correct term to describe anabolic steroids is anabolic-androgenic steroids; however, they are commonly referred to as anabolic steroids.

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) has, at the request of Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), and supported by the Home Office, reviewed the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) Prohibited List in previous years to consider those drugs included on it where there may also be harms commensurate with the Misuse of Drugs Act. The ACMD has reviewed the 2011/12 list and identified 7-hydroxy DHEA and 7-keto DHEA for consideration. The ACMD is content that this advice represents present requirements under its consideration of the WADA list. I would like to inform you that there are further compounds on the WADA list that will be reviewed by the ACMD at a later date and it will provide advice accordingly; these include synthetic cannabinoid analogue receptor based agonists, selective androgen receptor modulators (SARMS) and some stimulants.

The ACMD has previously provided advice on anabolic steroids: in December 2009 the Home Office accepted the ACMD's recommendation to control 15 anabolic steroids and 2 non-steroidal agents¹ (growth promoters) under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 as Class C substances and classify as Schedule 4 (IV) under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001.

In September 2010 the ACMD published advice relating to the harms of anabolic steroids², which considered in detail their social and physical harms if misused. The advice was produced due to the ACMD's concerns around the misuse of anabolic steroids, and in particular by young people. These substances have become 'popular' in relation to body building and image enhancement and there is some evidence that such use is increasing. There is evidence to show that anabolic steroid use can be harmful; potentially causing both psychiatric and physical problems to the individual.

The ACMD has carefully considered the potential physical and social harms of 7-hydroxy DHEA and 7-keto DHEA and advises that these are commensurate with other Class C drugs. The ACMD therefore advises that they are controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 in Class C and as Schedule 4 (IV) substances under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001, so as not to preclude legitimate use on prescription.

As in its previous advice, the ACMD is mindful of its responsibilities under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, its recommendation for classification of the two anabolic steroids (listed above) potentially associated with sport, body building and image enhancement is based on: i) demand reduction; ii) harm minimisation, and; iii) reduction of supply.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Les Iversen', written in a cursive style.

Professor Les Iversen
Chairman

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

¹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/corporate-publications-strategy/home-office-circulars/circulars-2009/021-2009/21-2009?view=Binary>

² <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/alcohol-drugs/acmd1/anabolic-steroids-report/anabolic-steroids?view=Binary>