

Public issues and personal problems



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PUBLIC ISSUES AND PERSONAL PROBLEMS Most of the time, we don't think of problems we go through as social issues, but when we compare ourselves to others we can see that many of the everyday problems of average people occur on a larger basis in our country. Some are easier to spot such as unemployment, even though it affects each person laid off once the rates get to a certain point it is obvious that the rates are due to economical factors not the characteristics of each individual (Mills 1). I have found that a problem that is becoming more evident in our daily life is a growing use of dangerous supplements in teenage athletes.

When I was thirteen I started in my first school sport. I became a runner. I fell in love with the sport. As I grew older it was something that dominated my life on and off the mat. I often found myself in class wishing I were running. Naturally as I became older I also became more a competitive athlete, as did the rest of my friends that ran or played any high school sport for that matter. Talk of being a competitor at state championships or who was favored at the next match often filled the hallways. Generally this competition appeared a good thing to me. I was a better athlete because of that competition.

Being a runner I often heard people talk about “ why would you do that to your body? ” referring to dropping weight. At first the idea seemed absurd. The conversations with others about what supplements I was taking or not taking took place almost every day. As I spent more time conversing with wrestlers from other school I found the phenomenon was far from isolated to my school or even my state. Pills such as Xenadrine, DHEA, and Androstat were almost a necessary thing. To keep up with the bell curve of students

taking the same things everyone “ had to do it. Instead of sticking with these already dangerous or at the very least unhealthy pills people often felt pushed to try even bigger and better things. Over time the use of very unhealthy supplements to drop or gain weight or to gain any kind of edge became almost common. Sadly many of these pills, drinks, and even injections were available to anyone at most “ healthfoodstores. ” The long term use of these can have a devastating effect on teens. I have seen the best wrestlers walk off the mat and into the locker room to puke. Thankfully I have never known anyone personally to suffer any long-term effects but I have often seen on the news and read in the paper about athletes that have. I recently saw on the news that a pitching prospect for the Orioles, Steve Belcher, died from taking Xenadrine RFA-1. It is true that this was not the only factor, but it was defiantly a major contributor. I am familiar with this particular drug as I probably went through two hundred dollars worth in high school. The major ingredient is Ephedrine. Ephedrine is the principal extract from Ma Huang. Ephedrine is a “ beta-adrenergic agonist,” which means it increases heart rate, blood pressure, and thermal energy by burning fat for energy.

My experience with this is it is very effective but unless a person is already in good health (which is unlikely if they are taking a fat burning formula) this can be a very dangerous chemical. Such as in the case of Steve Belcher. The company that makes Xenadrine recently released a new formula of the supplement with out Ephedrine in my opinion because this is because Ephedrine is being evaluated by the USDA and may become illegal over the counter. As I made it though high school and I no longer take part in the rush

for the hot new supplements to make me perform better I have found that I haven't even thought about it in a long time.

At the time I didn't even give it a second thought but now I see that supplements that are meant for short term use by grown adults or that are just plain not healthy to use for anyone are finding their way to the hands of athletes more often. The need to gain an edge and be the best drives them to do whatever it takes for them to win. I find myself relegated to telling my little brother of the dangers and hoping that these supplements will be pulled from the shelf before more harm is done. Bibliography: Works Cited Mills, C. Wright " The Promise" Mapping the Social Landscape, Ed Susan J. Ferguson McGraw Hill, 2002. 1-6.