# Anti-doping experts warn athletes about contamination risks from intimate relationships



Anti-doping experts are advising elite athletes to exercise caution regarding intimate relationships, particularly one-night stands, to minimise the risk of contamination from banned substances. This guidance emerged during a conference held in London on Thursday, where the discussion centred on performance-enhancing drugs and the need for clearer regulations distinguishing between intentional doping and contamination.

The topic is underpinned by two notable cases from recent years in which athletes were cleared of intentional doping after successfully arguing that banned substances had entered their systems through sexual partners. In 2009, tennis player Richard Gasquet was found not guilty of cocaine use after the Court of Arbitration for Sport concluded that his positive test was 'probably' due to kissing a woman in a nightclub. Similarly, US boxer Virginia Fuchs was exonerated in 2020 when it was shown that the metabolites found in her sample were consistent with exposure to GW1516, a prohibited endurance-enhancing drug used by her partner.

Travis Tygart, chief executive of the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), expressed concerns over the implications for athletes, stating, "It’s so pathetic that we’re having this conversation." He urged athletes to be vigilant about their intimate relationships and remarked on the absurdity of having to advise elite competitors on such personal matters. Tygart added that the current system places overwhelming responsibility on athletes, suggesting that anti-doping organisations need to share some of that burden.

He emphasised the potential consequences of focusing resources on cases that are less about intentional drug use and more about accidental contamination, arguing that this diverts attention from “intentional cheats” who may evade detection.

Tygart indicated that forthcoming changes to anti-doping regulations might involve re-evaluations of certain substances, specifically mentioning Clostebol, an anabolic steroid related to a positive test by tennis player Jannik Sinner last year. Although Sinner denied wrongdoing, he accepted a three-month ban, which he has nearly served. Tygart also cited Ostarine, a substance that was found in boxer Ryan Garcia's system following his fight against Devin Haney in 2024. Garcia, like Sinner, denied any intentional misuse of the substance, subsequently accepting a one-year ban.

Tygart suggested that for select substances, notably Clostebol and Ostarine, there is a possibility of establishing a Minimum Reporting Level (MRL). He noted that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has already implemented such measures for other substances, such as clenbuterol—typically linked to contaminated meat—and certain diuretics, advocating for extending this approach to additional drugs.

As the conversation surrounding anti-doping and athlete safety continues, these developments highlight ongoing challenges in managing drug regulations in elite sports, with potential implications for how athletes navigate both their personal and professional lives.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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