

# American Pharmaceutical Companies Are to Face International Sanctions

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*Doping in sports is widely discussed in mass-media, and necessity of fight against doping is declared almost every day. No one actually doubts that the use of banned substances in sports should be vanished into oblivion, as well as penalties for anti-doping violations should be stricter.*

In the 1980s, American researcher and publicist Robert Goldman asked elite athletes whether they would take a drug that would guarantee them overwhelming success in sport, but cause them to die after five years. The result was astonishing – more than half of athletes responded positively as in previous research by Gabe Mirkin.

The similar analyses held by American scientists in 2013 have shown that only 1% of respondents would take “magical suicide pill.” Thus it shows that the Goldman dilemma is dead today and the international sporting community rather disapproves the use of doping. Returning to the above-mentioned analyses in 2013, only 12% of responders would agree to take banned and harmless drugs. However the disapproval of doping doesn’t mean the problem of doping is overcome. This raises another dilemma: what is doping and what is medical treatment?

It is a very hard task to pick the wheat from the chaff and choose the substances to be banned as doping. There’s no secret that almost every professional athlete uses different types of stimulators, creams and vitamins to increase the effectiveness of a training session and reduce the recovery period. But the border between allowed and banned substances remains unclear.

At the same time, this unsettled issue works in favor of American pharmaceutical companies. These industrial giants develop and produce new performance-enhancing medications in close cooperation with WADA. The companies inform anti-doping authorities about the latest substances that can be potentially used as doping. For instance, such an agreement has been reached in 2014 between WADA and Pfizer headquartered in New York City.

Nevertheless pharmaceutical companies are ready to make money of supplying the athletes with controversial substances. The main goal is to sell off the drugs before they become prohibited. Especially it can be applied to sport supplements.

Sometimes under the guise of harmless sport nutrition the producers smuggle and sell prohibited substances.

The BALCO scandal in 2003 is a clear example. Victor Conte, the owner of San Francisco-based Bay Area Laboratory Co-operative (BALCO) was found guilty of selling sport supplements containing substances that could go undetected by drug testing, even on the Olympic level.

In 2013 Mr. Conte launched another company called Scientific Nutrition for Advanced Conditioning (SNAC) that is still operational. And there's no guarantee that the man with damaged reputation won't revert to type and produce a new "invisible substance." However, WADA keeps silence, it seems that such scandals are beneath WADA authority.

February 11, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov claimed that the United States helped orchestrate the Olympic doping allegations and subsequent ban of the Russian team from the Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Due to the recent developments Russia will definitely look for the way to revenge the USA for Olympic ban. American sport-related business - especially pharmaceutical companies - can be put under Russian sanctions, there are no doubts. If China follows Russia the consequences will be very painful for American economy because of the size of Chinese market. This scenario is not fantastic as Beijing has repeatedly supported the steps Moscow undertook in its feud with Washington. The Russian doping scandal can rise to a new level.

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