

The many `variations` of banned drugs in sports

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RECENTLY, one of our sportsmen was alleged to have been tested positive for a certain banned drug which, according to one source, was a type of painkiller.

However, we have to realise that certain painkillers like codeine, which is a relatively harmless drug and allowed to be used in sports, can be converted into morphine (which is banned), by certain liver enzymes in the body.

Different people have different conversion rates. The rate varies from 0% to 15%. If a large amount of codeine-contained medication such as certain types of cough mixtures, anti-diarrhoea drugs or painkillers are taken, the urine in some individuals will contain enough morphine to be tested positive for this banned drug.

Hence, it is not possible to tell the difference between this morphine in the urine from those which comes from consuming morphine itself.

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