Little is known about the stigma of anabolic steroids compared with other illicit drugs. Steroid stigma has implications for treatment-seeking and for public policy development. Steroid stigma is likely a double-edged sword that discourages both treatment-seeking and uptake of the drug.

Aims: i) To elucidate predictors of steroid stigma, and ii) to compare steroid stigma with the stigma of marijuana (a "soft" drug)

Hypotheses: i) Exposure to steroid users and lifetime history of drug use would predict lower levels of steroid stigma, and ii) time spent exercising, participation in competitive sports, and participation in weight-training or bodybuilding would predict higher levels of steroid stigma.

Methods

Sample: 304 psychology undergraduates (33% male, 60% Caucasian, $M_{age} = 19$ years)

Measures: Personal history of drug use, exposure to drug users, and stigma of drug use (for both steroid and marijuana)

Design: Within-subjects

Procedure: Participants completed a 20-minute Internet survey in return for course credit. Order-of-presentation of stigma and marijuana measures was counterbalanced.

Analyses: Multiple regressions predicting i) stigma toward users, and b) exposure to users.

Exposure: 15% of undergraduates reported that they have a friend who uses steroids (a firm belief – not just suspicion)

Stigma: Undergraduates report much greater stigma toward steroid use than marijuana use (a very large effect)

Stigma predictors: Greater exposure to steroid users did not predict steroid stigma, but greater exposure to marijuana users did predict less marijuana stigma. Steroid stigma was not predicted by time spent exercising, participation in competitive sports, or participation in weight-training or bodybuilding. History of drug use predicted lower stigma of both steroids and marijuana.