

On behalf of
Antidoping Switzerland

Perceptions of the doping problem among the Swiss population

A special study on the population survey by Sport Switzerland 2014

Abridged version

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As part of 'Sport Switzerland 2014', the national survey on the sporting activities and interests of the Swiss population, a sample of 1065 people aged 15 to 74 was questioned about the issue of doping and anti-doping measures. Comparable data from 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2011 allow not only a snapshot of opinions about the doping issue but also to identify eventual changes over time.

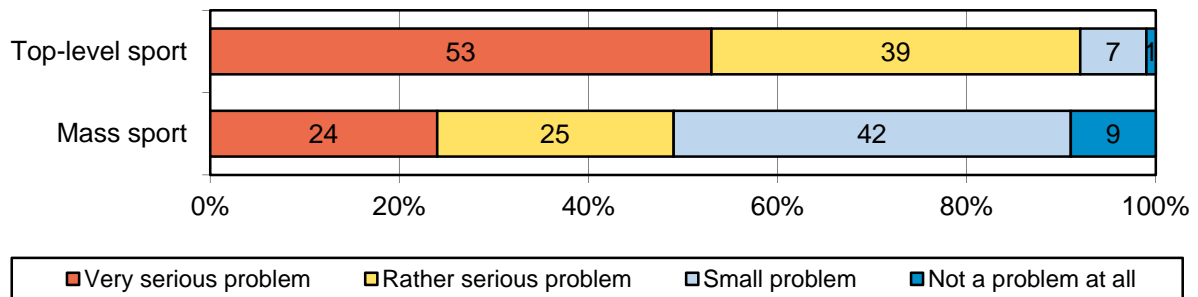
Perception of the doping issue and assessment of anti-doping measures

When Swiss people are asked which terms they associate personally with sport, doping does not play a central role. Health (80%), exercise (79%) and enjoyment/fun (71%) are terms much more commonly associated with sport. Over half of those asked also associate sport with fitness (58%), training (57%), physical feeling (53%) and exertion (52%). Sport is much less commonly linked with negative attributes like obligation (4%), aggression/violence (5%), cheating (6%), corruption (8%) or doping (16%).

However the population is aware of the doping problem. When asked about the primary problems in sport today, doping comes out on top (36%) followed by too much money/commercialisation (29%) and ever increasing performance expectations (14%). Other problems cited include violence among spectators (9%), increasing risk taking (8%) as well as corruption and bribery (8%).

The prominence attributed to the doping problem is also reflected by the fact that 92% of the Swiss population consider doping to be a significant issue in top-level sports. Around half also feel that doping is a big issue in mass sport (see fig. 1). Those polled differentiate between top-level sport and mass sport as well as between top-level sport at an international level and in Switzerland. 93% of respondents think that there is still a lot of doping happening in top-level sport. However, only 59% think that this is the case for top-level sport in Switzerland.

Fig. 1: Perceptions of the doping issue in elite-level and mass sport

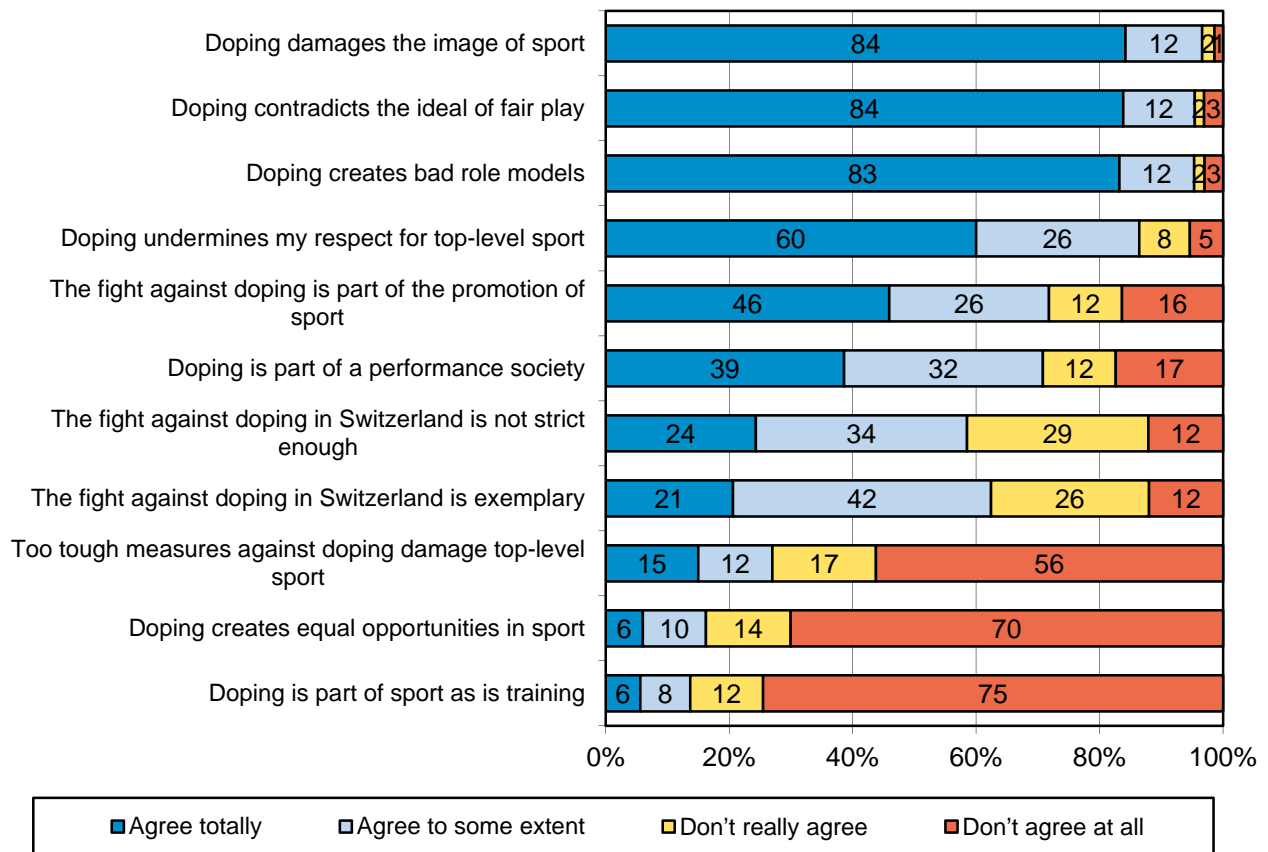


NB: top-level sport n=1033, mass sport n=993.

This strong negative attitude towards doping is reflected in the clear agreement of respondents with the statements: ‘Doping damages the image of sport’, ‘Doping contradicts the ideal of fair play’ and ‘Doping creates bad role models’ (fig. 2). Opinions are somewhat more divided when it comes to views on anti-doping measures in Switzerland. While 63% of the population consider anti-doping measures to be exemplary, 58% are of the opinion that anti-doping measures in Switzerland are not strict enough. Even among those who agree entirely with the statement that anti-doping measures in Switzerland are exemplary, 39% consider anti-doping measures in Switzerland to be too indulgent at the same time. This is not necessarily a contradiction in terms given that many of those questioned also want to see even stricter regulations and greater controls implemented, despite the exemplary work being carried out in Switzerland (in their opinions).

Views are also consistently in favour of anti-doping measures. 84% of the population want doping to be strictly prohibited. 13% of the respondents would permit doping under medical supervision and 3% would liberalise doping in general.

Fig. 2: Various opinions on the issue of doping

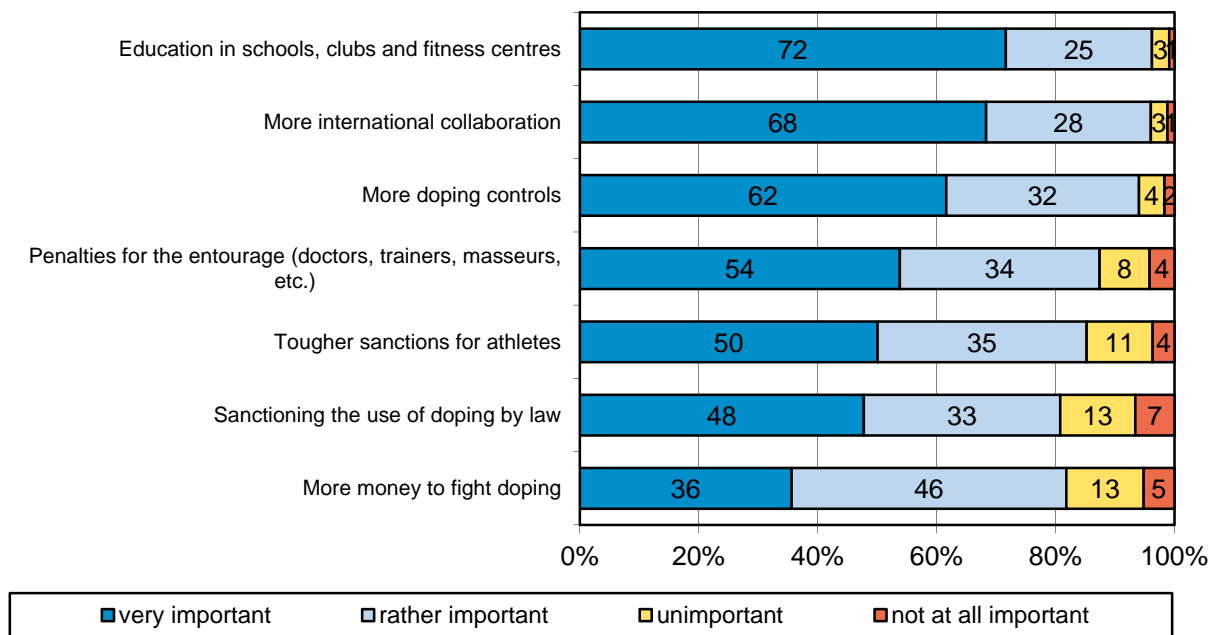


NB: Case numbers between 696 'Anti-doping measures in Switzerland are exemplary' and 1051 'Doping damages the image of sport' or 'Doping creates bad role models'.

The overwhelming majority of those asked are prepared to accept any possible consequences of the anti-doping measures. 94% of respondents support the campaign against doping even if this were to reduce international achievements by Switzerland's top athletes or could endanger the careers of Switzerland's top athletes.

Various measures are deemed to be important in the fight against doping. The most important measures are deemed to be increasing awareness in schools, sport federations and fitness centres (97%), more intensive international collaboration (96%) and more doping controls (94%) (see fig. 3). According to those questioned, responsibility for anti-doping lays with the athletes themselves (45%) and their coaches (38%). The respondents also consider that sports federations (26%), sports physicians (22%) and other members of the support team (13%) hold responsibility.

Fig. 3: Opinions on the importance of various anti-doping measures

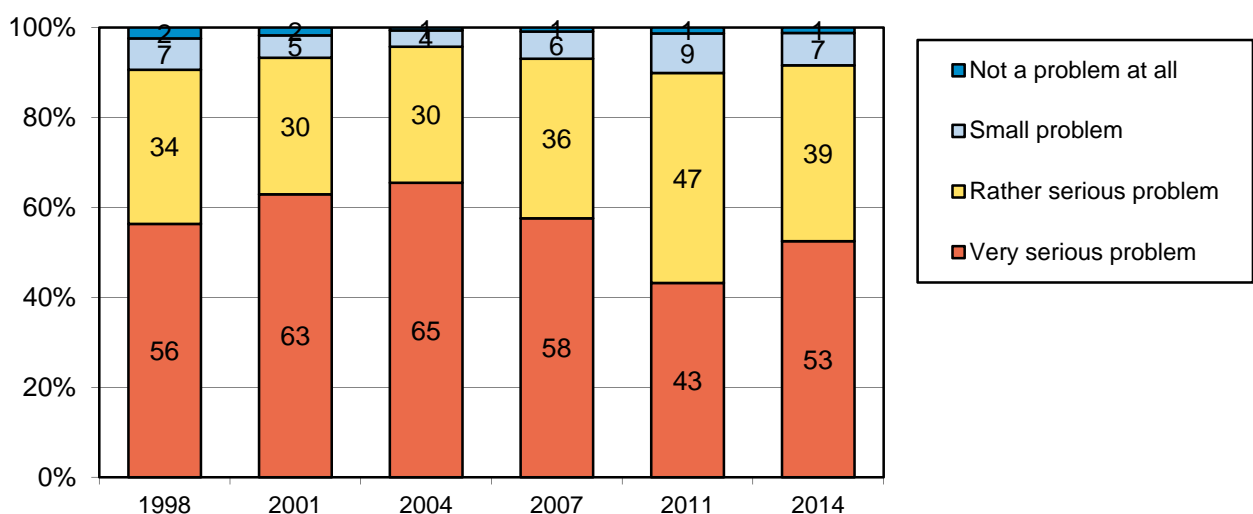


NB: Case numbers between 995 and 1050.

Changes to perceptions of the doping problem from 1998 to 2014

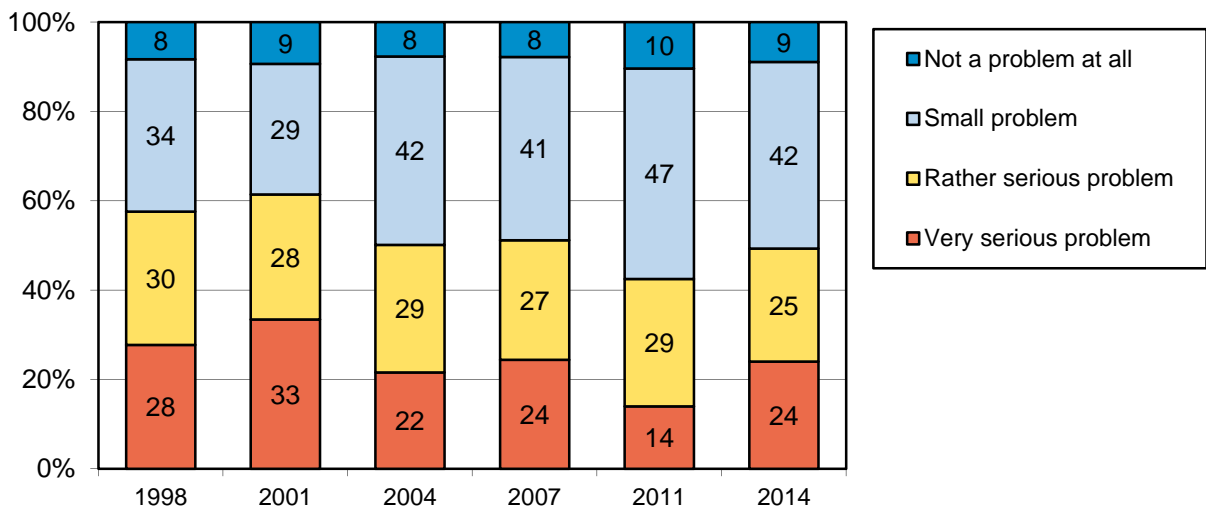
The doping issue in elite-level sport is currently considered to be slightly more serious than it was in 2011. However, perception of the problem still lies below the peak value of 2004 (see fig. 4). Respondents also consider misuse of drugs in mass sport to be more of a problem than it was 2011. Values are at a similar level to 2004 and 2007 (see fig. 5).

Fig. 4: The extent of the doping problem in elite-level sport (1998-2014)



NB: 1998 n=788; 2001 n=1492; 2004 n=2104; 2007 n=1011; 2011 n=1002; 2014 n=1033. At the 95% level, significant differences between 2014 and past years based on a Kruskal-Wallis test by comparing years in pairs: 2011, 2007, 2004, 2001.

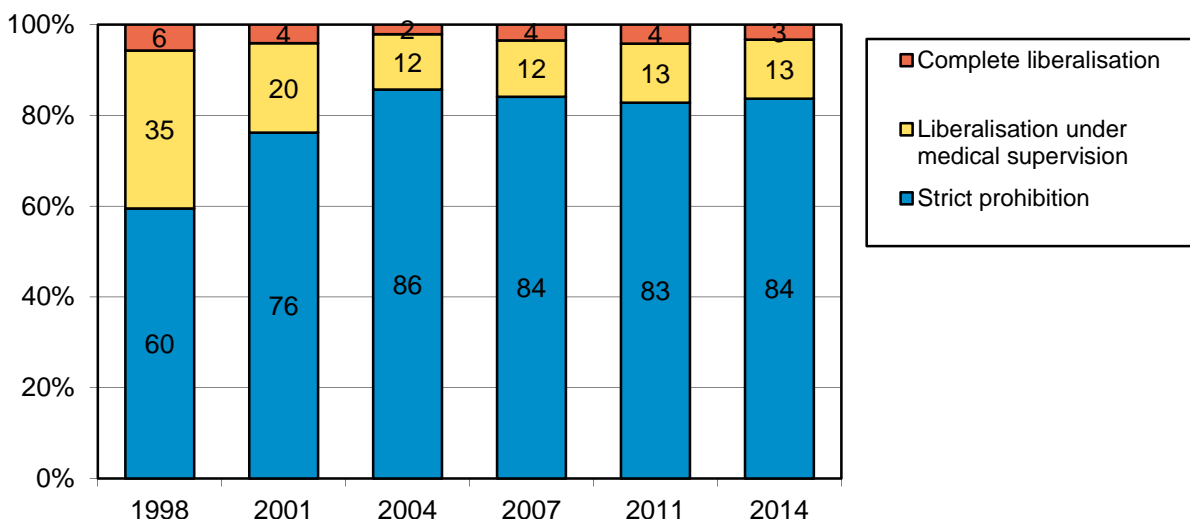
Fig. 5: The extent of the doping problem in mass sport (1998-2014)



NB: 1998 n=771; 2001 n=1447; 2004 n=2005; 2007 n=946; 2011 n=984; 2014 n=992. At the 95% level, significant differences between 2014 and past years based on a Kruskal-Wallis test by comparing years in pairs: 2001, 2011.

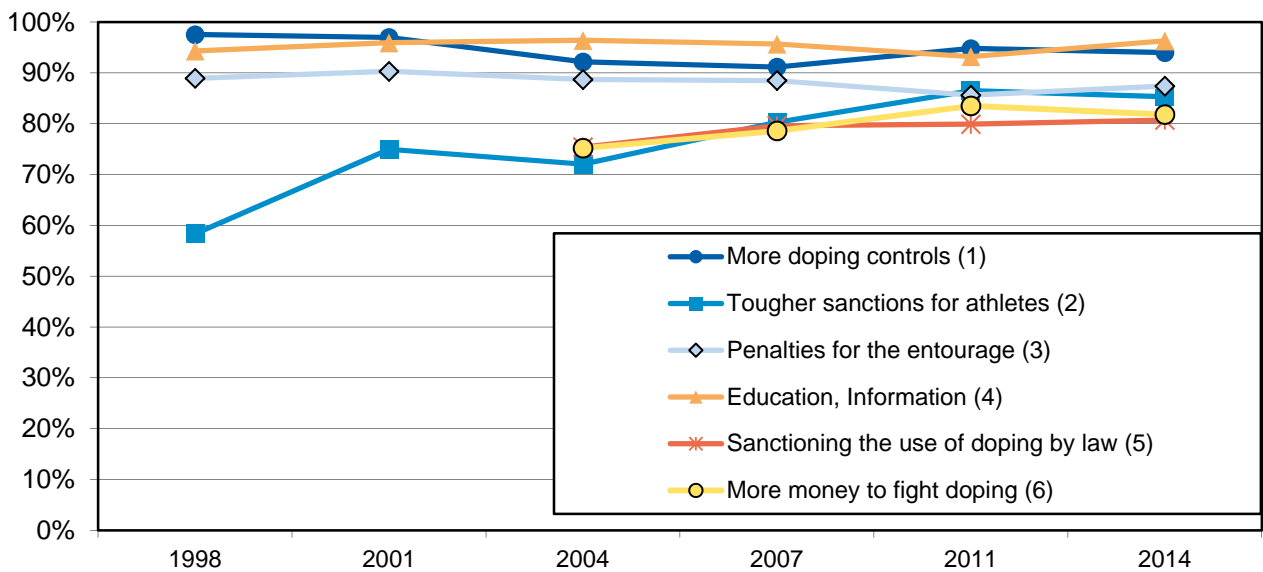
Calls for a strict ban on doping and a consistent anti-doping strategy have remained high since 2004 (see fig. 6). However since 2004, there has been much greater approval of measures such as harsher punishments for athletes, more money for anti-doping campaigns and punishment of doping by law (see fig. 7). Anti-doping measures in Switzerland are regarded somewhat more critically than in 2011 and are generally considered as too indulgent or not setting a good example (see fig. 8).

Fig. 6: Desired future approach to the doping problem (1998-2014)



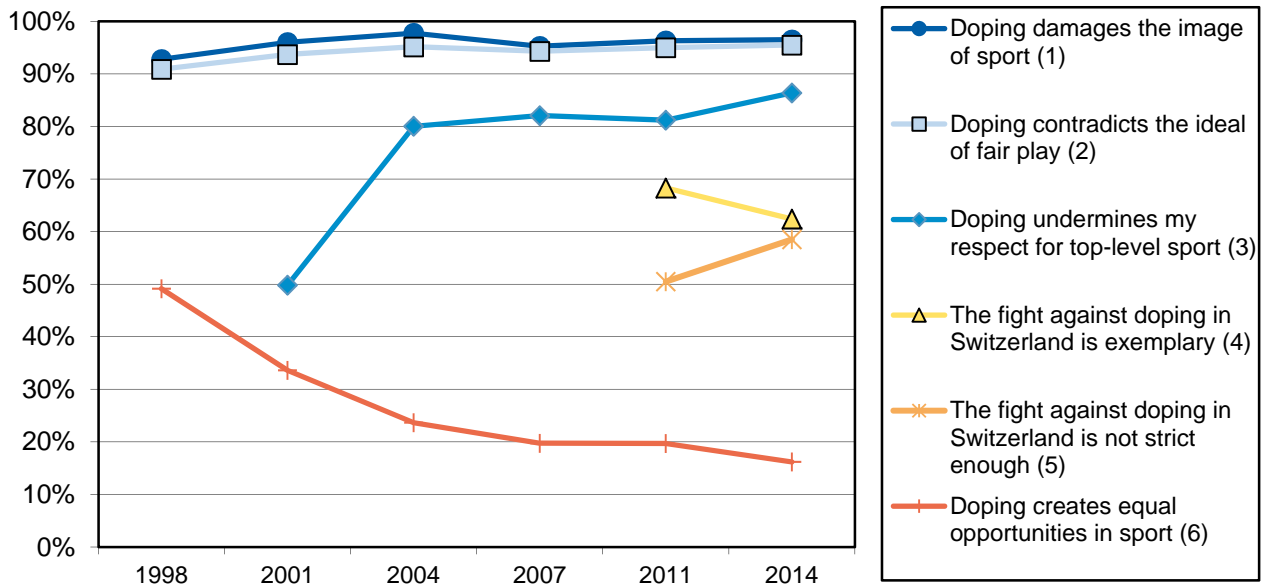
NB: 1998 n=785; 2001 n=1486; 2004 n=2007; 2007 n=1008; 2011 n=1003; 2014 n=1050. At the 95% level, significant differences between 2014 and past years based on a Kruskal-Wallis test by comparing years in pairs: 1998, 2001.

Fig. 7: Approval of various anti-doping measures (1998-2014)



NB: At the 95% level, significant differences between 2014 and past years based on a Kruskal-Wallis test by comparing years in pairs: (1) n.s.; (2) 1998, 2001, 2004; (3) n.s.; (4) n.s.; (5) 2004; (6) 2004

Fig. 8: Statements about the doping problem (potential share of those questioned who agree with the various statements, 1998-2014)



NB: At the 95% level, significant differences between 2014 and past years based on a Kruskal-Wallis test by comparing years in pairs: (1) 1998; (2) 1998; (3) 2001, 2004; (4) 2011; (5) 2011; (6) 1998, 2001, 2004.

Differences of opinion about the doping problem

Although the perception of the doping problem and opinions on anti-doping measures are influenced by the socio-demographic characteristics of those questioned (including age and residential region) and their interest in sports events, there is a clear and wide-spread rejection of doping across all groups of the Swiss population. Some notable differences in various categories compared to the overall population are presented briefly here (see fig. 9 to 11).

People under 30...

- less frequently cite doping as the primary problem in sport (compared with the 30-59 age group)
- are less likely to think that there is too much doping in top-level sport in Switzerland (compared with the 30-59 age group)
- are less likely to consider there to be a significant doping problem in top-level sport
- consider various anti-doping measures to be less important

People over 60...

- less frequently cite doping as the primary problem in sport (compared with the 30-59 age group)
- are less likely to think that there is too much doping in top-level sport in Switzerland (compared with the 30-59 age group)
- are, despite this, more likely to think that there is a very serious doping problem in mass sport
- consider various anti-doping measures to be more important

People from Ticino...

- are more likely to consider doping a primary problem in sport
- are more likely to think that there is a very serious doping problem in top-level sport
- are more likely to think that there is a very serious doping problem in mass sport
- consider various anti-doping measures to be more important

People from the Lake Geneva region...

- are more likely to consider doping a primary problem in sport
- are more likely to think that there is a very big doping problem in mass sport
- consider various anti-doping measures to be more important

Fig. 9: Proportion of people who claim that doping is a primary problem in sport, based on socio-demographic criteria (as a percentage)

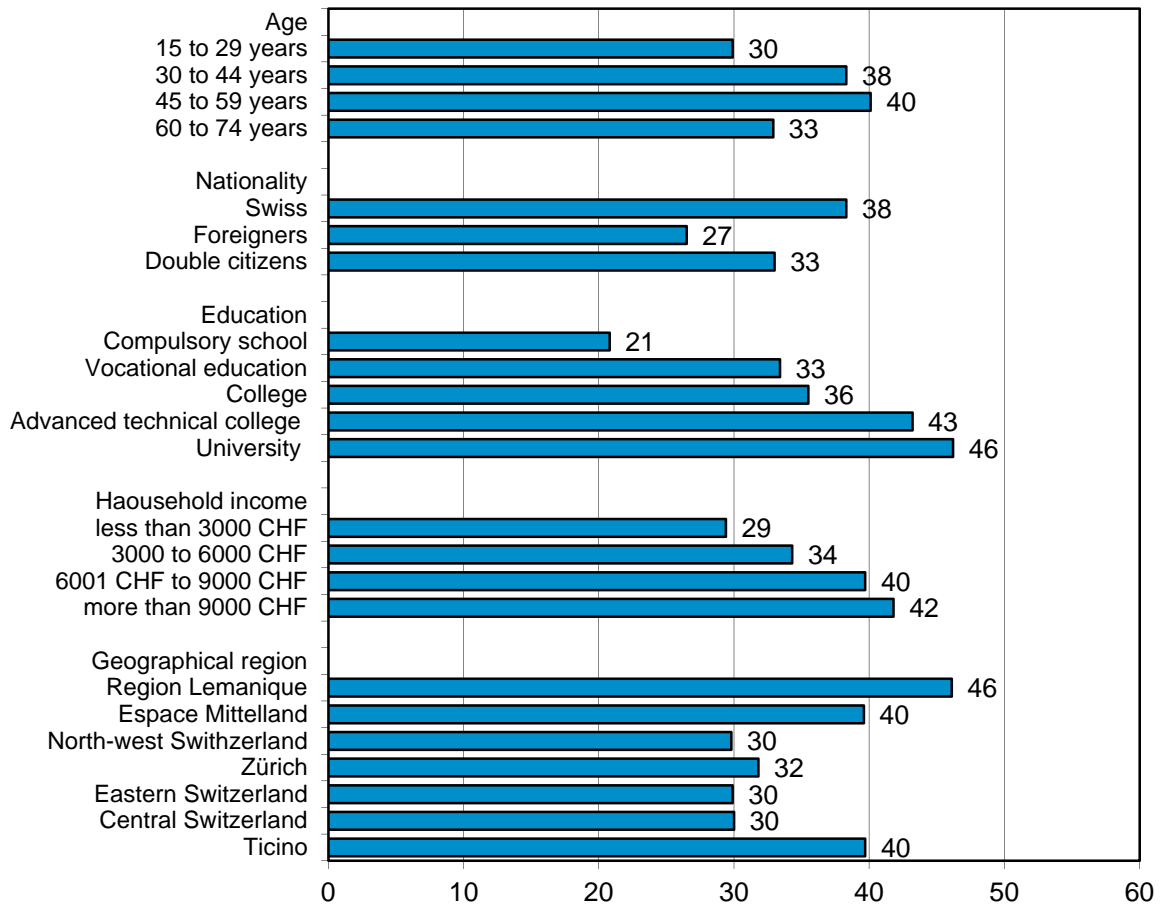


Fig. 10: Estimation of the importance of greater funding for anti-doping measures, based on socio-demographic criteria

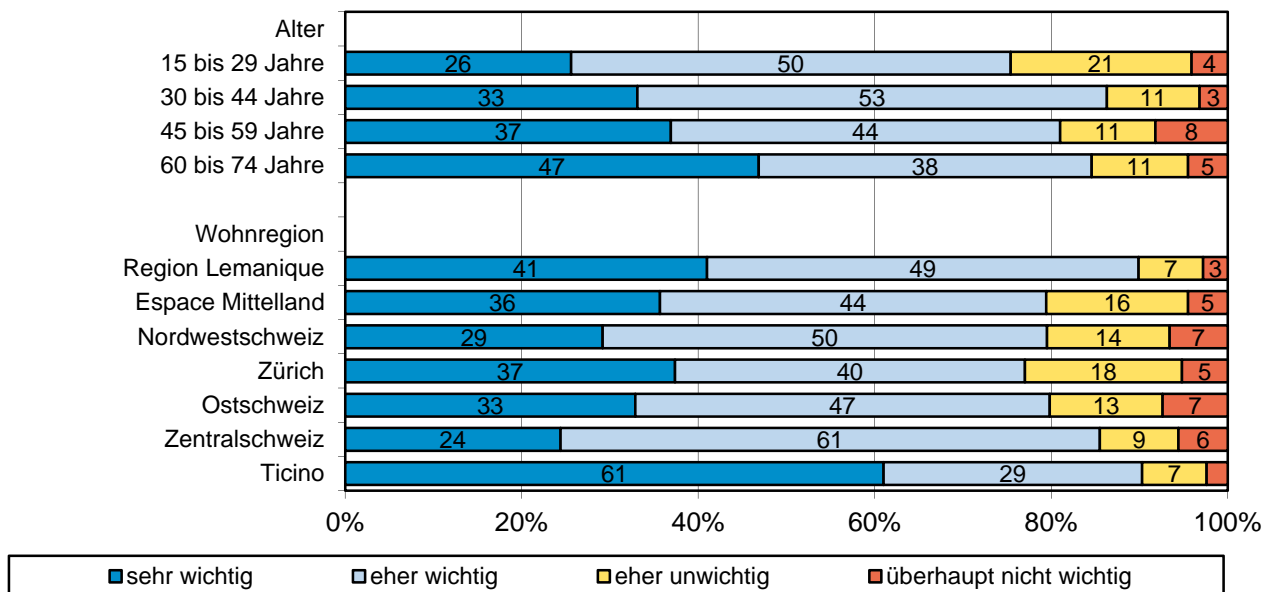
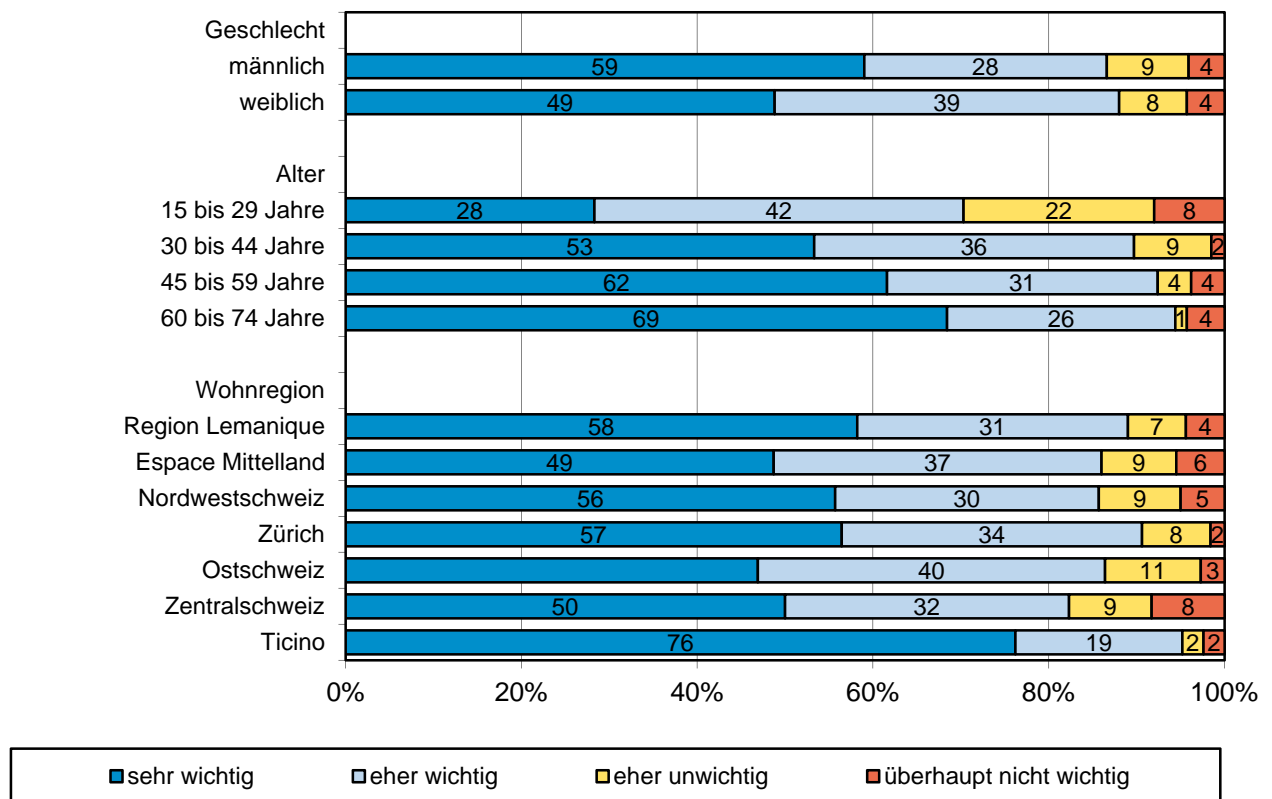


Fig. 11: Estimation of the importance of harsher punishments for the entourage in anti-doping measures, based on socio-demographic criteria



While sporting activity only has minimal influence on the perception of doping, there is a noteworthy connection between interest in sporting events ('To what extent are you interested in sporting events by following sport in the media?') and assessment of the doping problem (see fig. 12 and 13).

People with little interest in sporting events:

- are less likely to consider doping a primary problem in sport
- are more likely to think that there is too much doping happening in elite-level sport in Switzerland
- consider Switzerland's anti-doping measures to be too indulgent
- consider certain anti-doping measures to be less important
- attribute less responsibility to the coaches and sports physicians

People with a significant interest in sporting events:

- are more likely to consider doping a primary problem in sport
- are less likely to think that there is too much doping happening in elite-level sport in Switzerland
- are less likely to consider Switzerland's anti-doping measures to be too indulgent
- consider certain anti-doping measures to be more important
- attribute more responsibility to the coaches and sports physicians

Fig. 12: Agreement with the statement that there is too much doping in elite-level sport in Switzerland, based on interest in sporting events

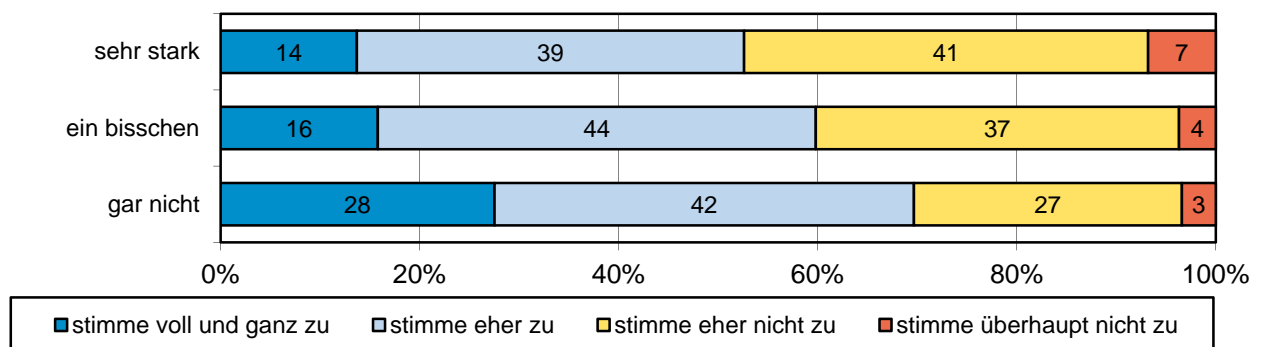
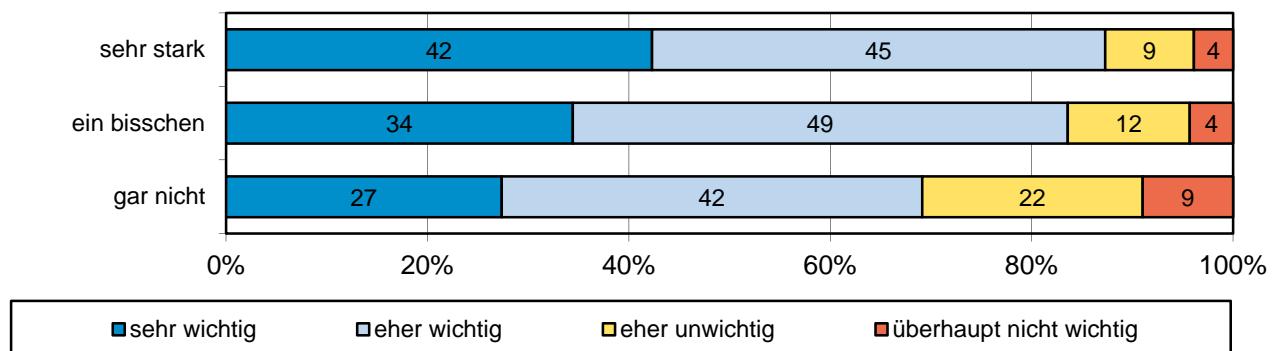


Fig. 13: Estimation of the importance of investing more money in anti-doping measures, based on interest in sporting events

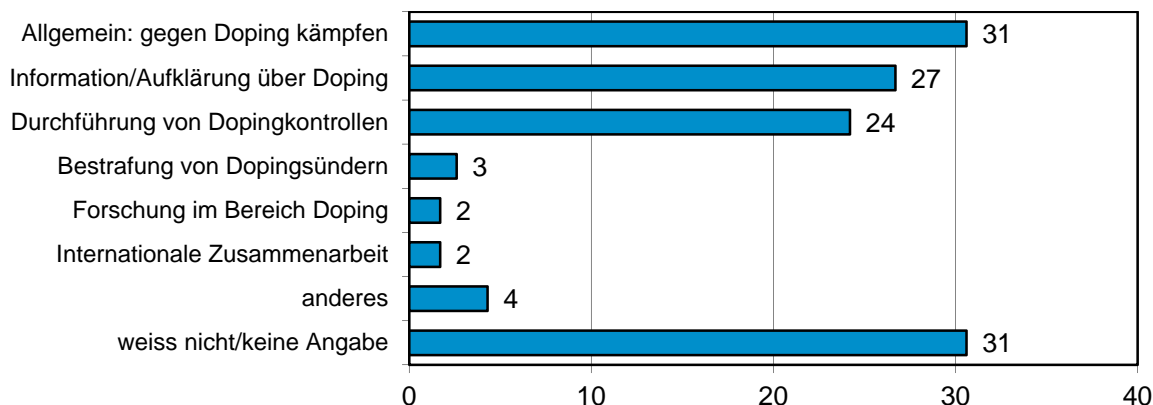


Awareness and assessment of the 'Antidoping Switzerland' foundation

Although the foundation plays an important role in enhancing the credibility of sport, only one in three people are familiar with Antidoping Switzerland. 60% of those asked had never heard of or read about the foundation and one in ten people were unsure. Further analysis reveals that women, non-sporty people and those with little interest in sport are less likely to have heard of Antidoping Switzerland.

When asked what the role of Antidoping Switzerland was, respondents most frequently answered with anti-doping measures followed by providing information and raising awareness as well as carrying out doping tests (see fig. 14). One third of people who claim to have heard of or read about Antidoping Switzerland are unable to provide any further information about the foundation. The fact that only 19% of respondents are able to name numerous activities undertaken by Antidoping Switzerland confirms the comparatively low level of awareness of the foundation and its activities.

Fig. 14: Awareness of the activities of Antidoping Switzerland (as a percentage, multiple answers possible)



NB: n=314. This question was only answered by people who indicated they had heard of or read about Antidoping Switzerland.

The assessment of Antidoping Switzerland is somewhat mixed. The average mark allocated to the foundation for its work is 4.2 (4 is adequate). 16% of those asked (who had already heard of or read about Antidoping Switzerland) rate its activities and services as inadequate. However the importance of this rating should not be overly emphasised because a considerable proportion of those asked did not have sufficient knowledge of the activities undertaken by Antidoping Switzerland. The majority of those asked also state that anti-doping measures in Switzerland are exemplary but could still be improved (see fig. 2).

Conclusion

Doping is consistently identified as a primary problem in sport (and especially elite-level sport) by the Swiss population. A clear distinction is made between elite-level sport at an international level and in Switzerland. Elite-level sport in Switzerland has a much better image.

All sectors of the population and regions of Switzerland have a clear anti-doping stance and support uncompromising anti-doping measures. However opinions on the doping problem are influenced by age, residential region and interest in sporting events.

The perception of the problem has increased again slightly since the survey undertaken in 2011. The population more frequently considers doping to be a big problem in elite-level as well as mass sport now. However, respondents also think that anti-doping measures in Switzerland are generally too indulgent and less exemplary than they were two years ago. Looking back at the entire 15-year period of systematic investigations into perceptions of doping in the population, the following impression emerges: drug-taking is widely rejected. Acceptance of harsh measures (especially against athletes found guilty of drug-taking) has clearly increased since 1998 although confidence in a 'clean' sport has not (yet) increased accordingly.