

# Anabolic steroids linked to higher rates of premature death in men

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Men who use androgenic anabolic steroids—such as testosterone—may face a higher risk of early death and of experiencing more hospital admissions, according to a new *Journal of Internal Medicine* study.

For the study, 545 men who used androgenic anabolic steroids were matched with 5,450 controls. In addition, 644 men who were sanctioned because they refused to submit to a doping test and 6440 controls were included as a replication cohort.

Over an average follow-up of 7.4 years, there were seven (1.3 percent) deaths among users of androgenic anabolic steroids and 23 (0.4 percent) among participants in the control group, translating to a three-times higher risk of [death](#) associated with androgenic anabolic steroids. The median annual number of hospital contacts was 0.81 in the androgenic anabolic steroid users and 0.36 in the controls. Acne, gynaecomastia, and [erectile dysfunction](#) affected more than 10 percent of the androgenic anabolic steroid users, and the prevalence of these disorders was significantly higher than in the [control group](#). Similar results were seen in the replication cohort.

"This study has shown that anabolic steroids are associated with a range of side effects that can be directly attributed to their pharmacological activities," said lead author Dr. Henrik Horwitz, of the University of Copenhagen, in Denmark.

**More information:** H. Horwitz et al, Health consequences of

androgenic anabolic steroid use, *Journal of Internal Medicine* (2018).  
[DOI: 10.1111/joim.12850](https://doi.org/10.1111/joim.12850)

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