Can a Person with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder be an Athlete?

Alexandru Robert Vlad, Andreea Ioana Lungu

Acta Medica Marisiensis, 2017
DOI: 10.1515/amma-2017-0030

Attention-deficit–hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common neuropsychiatric disorder that impairs academic, social and occupational functioning in children, adolescents and adults. It is characterized by excessive activity, restlessness, and nervousness. The disease occurs in general at children before the age of 7 and usually is not easy to be detected, due to various symptoms. When the diagnosis is established the physician can prescribe two types of drugs, stimulants: amphetamine, dexamphetamine, lisdexamphetamine, methylphenidate, and non-stimulants such as: guanfacine, atomoxetine, and clonidine. So what can be done for a person who has ADHD, and wants to be an elite athlete? Due to the rules established by the World Anti-Doping Agency the stimulant drugs are prohibited in competition and if traces of a prohibited substance are detected in the sample of blood of the athlete his access to competition can be blocked from 2-4 years, from that date of the incident. Fortunately for some athletes the disease was acute in childhood but as they grew up the symptoms were reminiscent and they could concentrate at the sporting task that was supposed to be achieved. What about those athletes that still have the symptoms? Well, they can be treated with the non-stimulant drugs, but their doctor must monthly verify if the list of prohibited drugs has been changed. In conclusion we can say that ADHD can be an impediment, but with the help of parents, teachers, and physicians the athlete can achieve very good performances.