

Doping Control Laboratory performance during Rio 2016 Olympic Games: An inside professional overview

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ABSTRACT

The paper published in JHSE by Nascimento et al. titled “Laboratory performance: Doping in Olympic sports and Rio 2016 Games” (Nascimento et al., 2018) presents a lack of clarity and enormous inaccuracy about the Brazilian Doping Control Laboratory performance during 2016 Olympics and Paralympics Games of Rio de Janeiro. The authors based their personal opinion on different regulatory reports on the anti-doping control situation in the Olympic Games (OG) in Brazil, but several paragraphs come from the anecdotal and mediatic background. Moreover, classical misinterpretation relative to the anti-doping system from people out of context was presented. The work developed in the Laboratório Brasileiro de Controle de Dopagem (Brazilian Doping Control Laboratory – LBCD-LADETEC/IQ-UFRJ) during the Games represented the state of the art in doping control analysis. In addition, regarding the analytical, infrastructure and security perspectives, the Report by the Independent Observers mentioned: “LBCD made a tremendous effort to ensure it was fully prepared to meet these requirements. As a result, LBCD is an outstanding legacy from the Games for the anti-doping movement in South America”. **Key words:** DOPING, ANTI-DOPING, OLYMPIC GAMES, ATHLETES, RIO 2016.

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To the Editor,

It came to our attention that the paper published in JHSE by Nascimento et al. entitled, “Laboratory performance: Doping in Olympic sports and Rio 2016 Games” (Nascimento et al., 2018) has some inaccuracies. Initially, we found the paper very interesting, but upon further review, we became concerned about the lack of clarity and enormous amount of inaccuracies that, undoubtedly, will give the readers a mistaken view of the work developed by the laboratory during the Games. As mentioned by the authors, the article was based on different regulatory reports on the anti-doping control situation in the Olympic Games (OG) in Brazil, but several paragraphs came from anecdotal and media sources. Moreover, the author highlighted that the fight against doping in the Rio 2016 OG was classified as the worst anti-doping in the history of the Games. In our view, it is just a personal opinion based on a single newspaper article from The Telegraphy. In the title of the article presented by Nascimento et al., it starts with “Laboratory Performance”, which indicates that all the information related to the anti-doping control comes from the Laboratório Brasileiro de Controle de Dopagem (Brazilian Doping Control Laboratory – LBCD-LADETEC/IQ-UFRJ). This seems to be a misinterpretation of the anti-doping system produced by taking information out of context. A doping control laboratory is responsible only for the sample analysis (WADA, 2015). With regards to the analytical, infrastructure and security perspectives, the report by the Independent Observers mentioned: “LBCD made a tremendous effort to ensure it was fully prepared to meet these requirements. As a result, LBCD is an outstanding agency for the Games for the anti-doping movement in South America” (WADA, 2016). Readers easily lose track of this fact among various pieces of inaccurate information and misdirected criticism.

The work developed in the LBCD during the Games represented state-of-the-art doping control analysis. The LBCD was built by the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro and remains after the Games for students, professors and researchers. In addition, all the structure is maintained under the same level of control, and the lab still performs anti-doping analysis.

The analytical strategies were defined according to the List of Prohibited Substances 2016 issued by WADA. Nevertheless, for the first time in the history of the Summer OG, the analytical scope included erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (ESA), blood analysis and detection of growth-hormone-releasing peptides (GHRPs) and growth-hormone secretagogues (GHSs) for all urine samples (Pereira et al., 2017).

During the OG, the LBCD received 4913 samples comprising 4071 urine and 842 blood samples. The total number of blood samples represents an increase of 5.8% compared to the number obtained during the 2012 London Games, as described in Pereira et al., 2017.

A total of thirty-three samples were reported as adverse analytical findings (AAF) during the Rio Olympic Games. The laboratory was notified that four of these samples were from WADA as part of the Game’s EQAS double-blind program to ensure 100% accuracy. Another 11 samples were covered by approved therapeutic use exceptions. Hence, 18 samples could be considered as “true AAFs”. This final AAF number is twice as high as the AAFs found at the 2012 Olympic Games. We strongly recommend that JHSE readers interested in the laboratory anti-doping activities seek detailed information in Pereira et al., 2017. In addition, it is appropriate that the article published by Nascimento et al., 2018 should state these situations, rephrase the title and present clear and accurate information.

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