



13 October 2017

**Mr Roger Legeay**

President

Movement for a Credible Cycling (MPCC)

Dear Mr Legeay,

Thank you for your letter of 5 October 2017.

WADA is well aware of the issues you raise related to glucocorticoids and Tramadol; regarding which, the Agency has been regularly consulting with experts and other stakeholders -- including the Cycling Anti-Doping Foundation (CADF) and the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI).

On the subject of glucocorticoids, please note that, during the last two years, WADA formed two working groups to deal with this complex subject. The UCI participated in the most recent meeting; which, among other outcomes, resulted in the decision to move forward to better refine reporting thresholds.

As you would be well aware, the List of Prohibited Substances and Methods (List) is harmonized across sports. In 2016, the List Expert Group considered the proposal to add glucocorticoids by intra-articular route to the List; however, this was not adopted following broad stakeholder consultation on the basis 'that there may be legitimate use by physicians; and that, the abuse in many sports appears limited or non-existent'.

Understanding the unique situation of cycling, under UCI's article 13 rules, the UCI have banned the use of all glucocorticoids injections eight days before the beginning of a competition. These rules have been welcomed by the cycling community (including by athletes and physicians); and, have had a positive effect on reducing the use or abuse of glucocorticoids in the sport of cycling, based on data from WADA's Anti-Doping Administration and Management System (ADAMS).

Scientific evidence indicates that the performance enhancing benefits of glucocorticoids are very narrow indeed; and that, for the most part, the use of glucocorticoids in sport is detrimental to performance (as well as health), which is a message that needs to gain wider reach. Organizations such as the MPCC, and others dealing with international sport and sport medicine, can play a valuable role in educating physicians regarding the health risks.

As it relates to Tramadol -- which is a unique analgesic with only partial opioid properties that has widespread therapeutic usage around the world -- it too has been regularly discussed by WADA's List Expert Group as part of the Narcotics section.

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The fact is that there are other commonly used therapeutic substances, such as codeine and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, which are also not prohibited for practical reasons; and that, the List Expert Group regularly evaluates as it pertains to the three List inclusion criteria in order to come to a reasonable decision for the benefit of sport. This includes regular dialogue with, and feedback from, all stakeholders.

Accordingly, in 2015, Tramadol was considered for inclusion on the List but, as it may be legitimately prescribed as part of a therapeutic regimen in certain situations, the majority of stakeholders felt that it should not be prohibited but rather be regulated by physicians, and physician groups, as part of proper medical practice.

Just recently, an International Olympic Committee Consensus Statement on Pain Management in Elite Athletes was published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine. One of the Statement's conclusions was that opioids should never be used in sport in 'naïve' subjects, (i.e. having never tried the medication before). It also concluded that opioids in general should only be prescribed as part of a step-by-step therapeutic approach and, in these instances, only for a short period of time.

WADA continues to engage with athletes, administrators, scientific experts and other stakeholders in order to understand the issues and ensure proper global anti-doping rules for the world of sport. And of course, the Prohibited List is a living document, which evolves annually as new information and evidence is obtained.

Yours sincerely,



**Olivier Niggli**  
Director General

Cc: Mr David Lappartient  
President  
Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI)

Ms Francesca Rossi  
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Cycling Anti-Doping Foundation (CADF)