

# Sports Medicine Channel

## Perls

### Hormone No Fountain of Youth

(Ivanhoe Newswire) – A great deal of attention has been focused on athletes and entertainers using the human growth hormone (hGH). However, researchers want to focus on the everyday people who use the substance and find out how it's impacting their lives. Some use hGH to ward off the normal effects of aging.

Dr. Thomas Perls, director of the New England Centenarian Study and an associate professor of medicine at Boston University School of Medicine, is quoted as saying, "Despite the overwhelming evidence that the risks and dangers of growth hormone far outweigh the clinically demonstrated insignificant benefit in normally aging individuals, the prescribing, distribution and sale of hGH for alleged anti-aging aesthetic and athletic enhancement has dramatically grown over the past few years."

These drugs, which are most often given in a "cocktail" that also includes anabolic steroids and other substances, can lead to swelling of the soft tissues, joint pain, carpal tunnel-like symptoms, enlarged breasts and insulin resistance. Some studies suggest hGH can lead to an increased risk for cancer as well. While they're marketed for their anti-aging properties, little research exists to show they are effective in turning back the clock.

Dr. Perls and his colleagues call for better public education about the risks, more focus on everyday users, and strengthening and enhancing the laws governing the illegal distribution of hGH.

SOURCE: Boston University press release, June 17, 2008