Say No To Marijuana Legalization Essay, Research Paper

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Marijuana also known as cannabis sativa is being used illegally by many Americans today of all ages. Before the 1960s, many Americans had never heard of marijuana, but today it is the most used illegal drug in this country. All types of marijuana are mind-altering drugs. They all contain THC, the main active chemical in marijuana, along with over 400 other chemicals. This drug should stay illegal for many reasons concerning the health and safety of Americans today. Saying no one ever died from smoking marijuana is like saying no one ever died from smoking tobacco.

?Today research shows that nearly 50 percent of teenagers try marijuana before they graduate from high school?(Grinspoon, 92-96). Most young teens and children start using marijuana for many reasons, they are curious, or want to fit in to a specific group of kids. Most young people who already smoke cigarettes and/or use alcohol are at higher risk for marijuana use. Most young people say they use marijuana to deal with psychological problems such as, anger, boredom, depression, anxiety, etc. As much as young people think marijuana is helping their problems, its only making things worse for their bodies and minds.

When using marijuana, some users suffer acute anxiety and have paranoid thoughts, this mainly occurs with some one new to the drug or in a strange environment. In some cases, a user who has taken a very high dose of marijuana can have severe psychotic symptoms and need emergency help. Marijuana delay?s the user?s short term memory, which means they may have trouble handling simple or complex tasks. Due to the effects that marijuana has on the mind, the user my find themselves in a difficult situations such as they could become involved in risky sexual behavior or take part in auto crashes. When you smoke marijuana and then drive or even perform both, many of the skills required for safe driving, may be changed such as, alertness, concentration, coordination and reaction time. These effects can last up to 24 hours after smoking marijuana. Marijuana may also make it difficult to judge distances and react to signals and sounds on the road. ?A recent study of patients in a shock-trauma unit who had been in traffic accidents revealed that 15 percent of those who had been driving a car or motorcycle had been smoking marijuana, and another 17 percent had alcohol in they?re system?(Trebach 68 ). Marijuana can direct the human mind to make wrong or a dangerous choice but it also can damage our bodies.

The body can be damaged, just as easy as the mind loses its control over the choices it makes. While all of the long-term effects of marijuana are not yet known, there are studies showing serious health concerns. Findings so far show that the regular use of marijuana or THC may play a role in cancer and problems in the respiratory, immune system, and reproductive systems. It is hard to find out whether marijuana alone causes cancer because many people who smoke marijuana smoke cigarettes and use other drugs. Marijuana smoke contains some of the same cancer-causing compounds as tobacco, sometimes in higher concentrations. ?Studies have shown that five joints per week may be taking in as many cancer causing chemicals as someone who smokes a full pack of cigarettes a day?(Downs 1-4). Tobacco smoke and marijuana smoke may work together to change the tissues lining the respiratory tract. Marijuana smoking could contribute to early development of head and neck cancer in some people. Cases of cancer, including cancer of the mouth, tongue, larynx, jaw, head, neck, and lungs have been reported in young marijuana smokers. Our immune system protects the body from many diseases, when marijuana is smoked it impairs the ability of T-cells in the lungs, causing someone with a disease more susceptible to other illnesses or diseases. Continued us of marijuana can lead to abnormal function of the lungs or airways. Scientists have found signs of lung tissue injured or destroyed by marijuana smoke. Marijuana and tobacco both cause many of the same breathing problems, both of them are addictive.

While not everyone who uses marijuana becomes addicted, when a user begins to seek out and take the drug frequently they’re known to be dependent on the drug. ?In 1995, 165,000 people entering drug treatment programs reported marijuana as their primary drug of abuse, showing they needed help to stop using?(Middleton A5). A withdrawal syndrome occurs, consisting of “anxiety, depression, sleep and appetite disturbances, irritability, tremors, diaphoresis, nausea, muscle convulsions, and restlessness. Some serious users of marijuana show signs of dependence because when they don not use the drug, they develop withdrawal symptoms. Some users experiencing marijuana withdrawal had symptoms,

such as restlessness, loss of appetite, trouble with sleeping, weight loss, and shaky hands.

According to one study, marijuana use by teenagers who have prior serious antisocial problems can quickly lead to dependence on the drug. That study also found that, for troubled teenagers using tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana, progression from their first use of marijuana to regular use was about as rapid as their progression to regular tobacco use, and more rapid than the progression to regular us of alcohol. (Maginnis 7-74 )

Researchers are not certain whether a newborn baby?s health problems are caused by marijuana will continue as the child grows. Preliminary research shows that children born to mothers who used marijuana regularly during pregnancy may have trouble concentrating. Doctors advise pregnant women not to use any drugs because they might harm the growing fetus. Some scientific studies have found that babies born to marijuana users were shorter, weighed less, and had smaller head sizes than those born to mothers who did not use the drug. When a nursing mother uses marijuana, some of the THC is passed to the baby in her breast milk. This is a matter for concern, since the THC in the mother?s milk is much more concentrated than that in the mother?s blood. This along with the other information on how marijuana is harmful gives us another reason for not legalizing it.

Marijuana should not be legalize for the safety of Americans and their health. Marijuana destroys the minds of many users. All parts of the body especially the immune system are damaged from marijuana. Marijuana can cause many of the same illnesses cigarettes cause. So in conclusion I believe that for the well being of the American people marijuana should stay illegal to ensure the safety of our future.

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