English 161

26 September 2017

Research Paper Proposal on Adderall

**Question:**

* Is unprescribed adderall worth the negative health effects on the human brain and body for success in academics?

**Problem:**

* Abuse of prescription drugs like Adderall is damaging the physical and mental/emotional well-being of college students rather than leading them to success.

**Broad public conversation brought up by my question:**

* The issue of drug abuse and misuse in academia and other stressful and demanding environments.

**Why is it worth examination and research?**

* It is an epidemic all over colleges nationwide and leading to serious health issues.
* This drug is a popular and prevalent one and therefore forces us to face the issues of the legality/ethics of drug use, and, more specifically, prescription drug misuse.
* It is believed to be a major cause of anxiety and depression.
* It is a highly addictive stimulant.
* The legality and ethics of adderall are in the interest of college administrations and pharmaceutical companies alike.

**Consequences of this research:**

* Colleges will focus more on drug abuse within their own buildings.
* Well-being of students will overall increase.
* Mental health issues in students will overall be decreased.
* Alternative methods to treat stress and procrastination will be demanded and sought.
* Law enforcement will understand the severity of the consequences of adderall and make efforts to reduce it as they have major opioids.
* Policy changes will be made to address issues such as prescription drug misuse and the overly high demands of academia and workplaces that lead to drug abuse.

**Who discusses this topic?**

* Health Professionals such as psychiatrists/psychologists (in alternative media found in studies usually online rather than in news or on databases)
* College students
* People suffering from ADHD and other disorders that adderall is produced/prescribed for
* Local news outlets (journals posted online, short tv news segments)
* School/College administrators and staffs (nurses, teachers, administrators)
* Parents
* Pharmaceutical companies
* Policy makers (FDA)

**Thesis:**

* The use of unprescribed Adderall among college students isn’t worth the repercussions such as the high risk of addiction, the negative effects on mental and emotional well-being, the negative physical effects (such as those on cardiovascular health) and the negative physical effects of the other drugs Adderall leads to, and the ethical issues it generates by creating disadvantages for students without access to it.

**OUTLINE:**

**Introduction:**

**Definition of adderall and what is used for:**

* Adderall is a stimulant that consists of a mixture of four amphetamine salts and is commonly used in the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity (ADHD) and narcolepsy.
* It is used to increase focus and energy, prevents exhaustion, which in theory leads to better performance.

**The great issue of adderall abuse:**

* Info: In 2015, the most commonly misused subtype of prescription stimulants in the past year among people aged 12 or older was amphetamine products, which include Adderall®, Adderall® XR, Dexedrine®, Vyvanse®, generic dextroamphetamine, generic amphetamine-dextroamphetamine combinations, and generic extended-release amphetamine-dextroamphetamine combinations. (SAMHSA)
* Among the 5.3 million people aged 12 or older who misused prescription stimulants in the past year, 4.8 million misused amphetamine products. (SAMHSA)
* In 2015, the following numbers of people aged 12 or older used other substances at least once in the past year (regardless of whether they misused prescription drugs in the past year): 1.7 million people used methamphetamine. This population is larger than the amount that used heroin. (SAMHSA)

**Is Adderall as effective for academic success as one may think according to statistics?**

* Paradoxical introduction starting with statistics on success rates of college students who use Adderall. “Nonmedical prescription stimulant users typically have lower grade point averages than non-users, suggesting that academically successful students are not likely to use prescription stimulants non-medically.” (Arria/DuPont)
* **Should a college student risk his mind and body and risk dependence for potential, unlikely, success in the future?**

**First Evidence: Addiction/Effects on mental-emotional well-being**

* **Adderall causes dependence/addiction**
  + Compared to non-users, research has demonstrated that nonmedical users of prescription drugs are more likely to meet DSM-IV criteria for dependence on alcohol and marijuana, skip class more frequently, and spend less time studying (Arria/DuPont).
  + More than 1 in 4 past year users of Ecstasy (29.0 percent), methamphetamine (28.9 percent), or cocaine (26.2 percent) misused tranquilizers in the past year. 28.9 percent is comparative to cocaine and ecstasy users (SAMHSA).
* **Adderall has emotional consequences similar to depression, and leads to further substance abuse**
  + In “*Tweaking and Tweeting*”, within many of the common tweets, the most common substances mentioned with Adderall were alcohol (4.8%) and stimulants (4.7%), and the most common side effects were sleep deprivation (5.0%) and loss of appetite (2.6%).
  + A four-class model had the best model fit, including (1) participants with low probabilities for any problematic substance use (Low substance class, 53.3%); (2) problematic users of all types of prescription drugs (Prescription drug class, 13.3%); (3) participants with high probabilities of problematic alcohol and marijuana use (Alcohol-marijuana class, 28.8%); and (4) those with high probabilities of problematic use of multiple drugs and alcohol (Multiple substance class, 4.6%). Participants in the 4 classes had distinct socio-demographic, mental health and service use profiles with those in the Multiple substance class being more likely to report mental health and behavioral problems and service use. (NCBI) This showed that nonmedical use of Adderall was related to the abuse of other problematic drugs.

**First counter argument:**

* If stimulants are so bad then why are prescribed patients doing just fine?
* Adderall when used properly can be found useful. *An amazing 81% of students believe that they are using it for the right reasons which are to be more productive in class and be more competitive (DMT Addict-help)*
* Defense: “Negative changes in EE including irritability, emotional lability, sadness, dysphoria, and tearfulness have been reported in numerous studies investigating stimulants (amphetamine and methylphenidate) and nonstimulants used to treat ADHD (Pomerantz).”

**Second Evidence: Physical Effects of Adderall**

* **Effects on body organs**
  + Long-term abuse of Adderall is known to promote liver damage, stroke, seizures and possible permanent changes in brain mass. Snorting Adderall may cause sudden nose bleeds, destroy nasal passageways and precipitate serious bacterial infections in the sinuses (Addict-help).
  + “Misuse of amphetamine may cause sudden death and serious cardiovascular adverse effects (Greely).”
* **Neurocognitive effects**
  + “Stimulants and other drugs proposed as potential cognitive enhancers are known to create profound state dependence, a phenomenon in which information or associations learned while ‘under the influence’ of a drug will later be remembered or used only when the learner has again taken the drug (Findling).” This will exacerbate dependence/addiction.
* Is it worth it? Nonmedical use of prescription stimulants (NPS) was linked to lower grades by the end of the freshman year of college, and this association was mediated by the effect of skipping class more frequently.

**Third Evidence: Ethical/Legal issues**

**Legal Consequences and the lack of awareness:**

* Students are unaware of the risk they are in with the legality of purchasing and selling prescription stimulants.
  + A study of young adults ranging in age from 18 to 28 shows that roughly 40% were unaware that purchasing, selling, or using prescription drugs without a prescription had legal consequences.

**Adderall becomes an obstacle to success**

* A future can’t be as successful if your record isn’t clean in comparison to a clean empty criminal record..
  + So is adderall contributing to success or preventing it?

**Ethics/damage to society**

* The disproportionate advantage of the drugs, if effective, would confer on the wealthy (Greely).”
  + The issue of lower classes which are dominated by minorities who have less money/access to adderall competing academically with the wealthy
    - This could ***further racial and class inequalities*** in America, especially if the drug is made legal when unprescribed

Adderall is a drug that is known and sometimes consumed by college students. This drug can become addictive to its average consumer. The consumption of Adderall can lead a person to build a high tolerance and/or an addiction. Furthermore, those who use Adderall without a prescription experience more negative side effects than people who were prescribed adderall. The side effects include but are not limited there could be deadly cardiovascular and other physical and psychological consequences if it is misused or abused, and it would create unfair advantages in society.

In my research claim, I am hoping to aim at the many who claim adderall is helpful to society but underestimate the consequences adderall produces. I aim to show that adderall has terrible side effects when used just to help college students succeed. Everyone wants to be successful. Success is a prize we have to sacrifice to reach and cannot expect to get by just taking pills.

I chose to side against adderall because I care about the people around me and do not want to see them addicted or dead because they tried to get success and a perfect life. I chose to side with college students, because like them, I struggle everyday trying to get my work done. Everyone wants to be successful. Success is a prize we have to sacrifice to reach and cannot get by just taking pills.

**Second counter-argument**:

-Adderall is a stimulant used to help like Red Bull has been used. Similar to adderall, Red Bull works in a similar way to supply people with the energy they need. Red Bull can do just the same amount of damage as Adderall but does not keep you up as long as adderall.

-Adderall’s physical and psychological effects are negligible and there is not enough research to prove that it changes cardiovascular health or affects emotional health.

-Only at very high amounts of abuse does the more adderall you take on a day to day basis mean the higher amount you need to get the same feeling, tylenol is riskier.

**Defense:**

* Dependence on adderall increasingly is common even among people who are prescribed the drug, unlike pain relievers like tylenol, or energy drinks such as red bull. Also adderall affects your emotional and physical health when abused which makes it much riskier than red bull and tylenol
* Stimulants, especially amphetamines are known to cause great damage to physical and psychological health over time, as shown in the above statistics, unlike over-the-counter pain relievers and energy drinks, which is why legal access to the latter is much easier
* Adderall is misused, when it comes to finding a supplemental product to stay awake. This product will work but be limited when it is used for educational purposes. How will one correctly take doses and taper correctly with caution, if it is given to them freely. Also, these students are probably uninformed about dependency and ways to fight it.
* Unlike drugs such as tylenol and things consumed for energy such as energy drinks or caffeine, Adderall is often misused with the purpose to help students do better if they have trouble focusing and this can *drastically* improve and heighten their performance.
  + A sense of discrimination would play a large role in this factor, because not everyone has the resources to take part in the consumption of adderall. Taking adderall is sense of cheating because it means that students have an unfair advantage of being able to focus and stay up all night and not be tired. You can conclude from that statement that minorities are at a disadvantage when it comes to receiving resources because a lot of them do not have the opportunity to do so.

**Solution:**

* The consumption of adderall should be banned from college campuses everywhere, because there are many negative aspects of adderall and it is not fair for it to be present.

**Works Cited:**

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(Explores the amount of students “abusing” adderall and how students themselves think about adderall. Doesn’t bring many negative effects of adderall and tells us sleep deprivation and appetite are the side effects talked about.)

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(This particular book talks about the positivities of all these stimulants for actual ADHD/ADD patients who need it. The reason it helps me in my research paper is because it also talks about the positivities in general of taking these drugs.)

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(This data shows the severity of Adderall as an issue within the United States, gives data on the amount of use and misuse of drugs, alcohol, etc.)