The Effects of ADHD Medications on the Performance of College Students

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Abstract

The use of ADHD medications by college students has increased significantly in the past years. The purpose of this research is to understand the consequences and the effects of intentional usage of ADHD drugs to enhance academic performance. By utilizing published works of credible sources, the goal of this research is to discover the results of ADHD medications and their effect on academic stability and development. Data sources include national surveys on college campuses and published data on the cognitive and academic performances of students using ADHD drugs.

Background

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD or ADD) is a learning ailment common among children and young adults. Stimulants, namely amphetamine and methylphenidate are US FDA approved prescriptions.

Amphetamine is one of the stimulants given a racemic compound C-H-N-O or one of its derivatives (dextroamphetamine or methamphetamine) frequently abused as a stimulant of the central nervous system, but used clinically especially as the sulfate or hydrochloride salt to treat hyperactive children and the symptoms of narcolepsy and as a short-term appetite suppressant in dieting.

Methylphenidate is a mild stimulant (C-H-N-O) of the central nervous system used in the form of its hydrochloride to treat narcolepsy and hyperactivity disorders (as attention deficit disorder) in children [12]. According to the Food and Drug Administration, stimulants are Schedule II substances, with a history of preclinical and human studies showing potential abuse liability.

Hypothesis

What are the effects of ADHD medications on the study and learning habits for college students?

Results

There are a variety of reasons for why students partake in illicit use of ADHD medication. The number one reason for why students take non-prescribed ADHD medication is to improve their Academic performance. The region in the United States with the highest use of illicit ADHD medication is the Northeast. Colleges with highly competitive admission standards are more likely to have a higher percentage of students taking non-prescribed ADHD medications. In addition Juniors in college are prone to having a higher percentage of usage then Freshman, Sophomores, and Seniors[6]. There is also not a significant difference between male and female usage of illicit ADHD medication and only a small percentage take non-prescribed ADHD medication. While people have a higher percentage of illicit use of ADHD medication.

While the number one reason for why college students take non-prescribed ADHD medication there is a negative correlation between students GPA and stimulant use. People who take ADHD medication are more likely to take illegal drugs such as marijuana and participate in heaving drinking which hinders a person’s GPA. Experiments that have been on illicit use of ADHD medication and academic performance show mixed results. Due to the unknown dosage used, effects of illicit use of ADHD medication varies from person to person, how long the effects will last for, and what types of tasks the students were performing while on the ADHD drugs. However it is very unlikely that the illicit use of ADHD improves a person’s academic performance in the long run [3].

Conclusion

A majority of people who take ADHD medication for illicit use believe that it will improve their GPA. Colleges with highly competitive admissions have a higher chance of having students take non-prescribed ADHD medication. There is a correlation between illicit use of ADHD medication and drug and alcohol abuse. It is also very unlikely that taking non-prescribed ADHD medication can improve the academic performance of a college student in the long term.

Work cited