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by Junior Aitange

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SHOULD CANNABIS BE LEGAL IN THE UK

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Cannabis is legal in several countries, including the United States and the Netherlands. Cannabis, on the other hand, is an illegal psychoactive in the United Kingdom, with the prohibition predicated on the belief that cannabis is more hazardous than legal drugs such as alcohol and tobacco (Pedersen et al, 2016). Regardless of the legislation, cannabis continues to outnumber other psychoactive substances (DrugWise.Org.UK, 2019)— with cannabis use increasing 17.3 percent between 2009 and 2015. (Statista.com, 2019). According to a new report by Roth (2019), cannabis consumption has increased by 60% in the last decade and will continue to increase (May 2019). Users may wish to revisit their "first high" and its low damage perception, which could explain the rise in usage (Statista.com, 2018)

The downgrading of cannabis from Class B to Class C was approved by David Blunkett (Home Secretary) in 2004. The reclassification was done in the intention of refocusing authorities' attention on more "serious substances" (News.bbc.co.uk, 2009). This change, however, only lasted 5 years before being relegated to class B. As a result, divergent opinions between scientists and governments might be seen (Shiner, 2015).

There has been a lot of study done to show how harmful psychoactive perceptions are to both physical and mental health. Henquet et al. (2005) found that cannabis can cause psychotic illnesses, however their findings were based on a dose-response model. This meant that consumers had to be dependent on the drug (daily use) or be taking a greater strength to experience these symptoms. Van Os et al. (2002) backed up these findings, suggesting that preventing cannabis use would avoid 13% of psychotic illnesses. These findings, however, play straight into the hands of pro-cannabis advocates, who feel that legalising the substance would allow the government to not only make money through taxes, but also monitor the drug's potency. how many individuals use it on a regular basis, and who they are (Szalavitz, 2019).

Contradictions over the link between cannabis and psychosis, on the other hand, have been made. Many cannabis users, according to Hall (2006), use cannabis as an escape from psychotic symptoms that are already present, even though this is a bad notion (Berry, 2019). Similarly, Statista.com (2018) and Hall et al (1999) have argued that certain legal psychoactive substances (alcohol and cigarettes) are more dangerous than cannabis.

Despite the fact that cannabis use has grown widespread, the law has yet to catch up. Given this, more research on the reasons for starting and continuing psychoactive use, as well as their potential psychotic repercussions, is warranted, as there has been very little direct research to create

conclusive proof (Lundqvist, 2005). As a result, there is "at the very least" "uncertainty" among users, specialists, and governors (News.bbc.co.uk, 2009).

Research Questions

This research proposal will investigate the reasons for first-time drug usage as well as the effects of cannabis on mental health. It will also look at whether consumers are aware of potential risks, as well as compile a complete comparison of the actual harm using secondary and primary research. As a result, determining if there is a direct link between cannabis consumption and psychosis.

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The following are the primary questions that this study project will attempt to answer:

- Is there a link between cannabis consumption and psychosis?
- Should all psychoactive substances, both legal and criminal, be prohibited until the brain has fully matured?
- Is it true that cigarettes and alcohol do more harm than marijuana?
- Finally, should marijuana be legal in the United Kingdom?

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Objectives

This study report will add to the body of knowledge in previously unexplored areas while also improving on what is currently known and assumed.

The major goals of this research project are to:

- Determine if all psychoactive substances should be prohibited until the age of 25.
- To gain a better knowledge of the effects of marijuana usage and to see if there is a link between psychotic symptoms and cannabis use.

CONSEQUENCES

Misuse of alcohol and drugs can have a wide range of outcomes; even a single incident of alcohol or drug misuse can have serious implications. The effects of substance abuse vary depending on the substances used, the amount and frequency of usage, the method of administration (e.g., orally vs. intravenously), and other factors. These are some of the effects:

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- Immediate, direct repercussions: Substance abuse can have immediate, direct health consequences ranging from heart rate and body temperature regulation to psychotic episodes, overdose, and death. Each year, many more individuals die from alcohol and drug overdoses than are killed in car accidents. In 2014, approximately 30,000 people died as a result of an overdose on heroin or prescription opioids, driving this trend. Unintentional overdoses of alcohol, cocaine, or non-opioid prescription medicines claimed the lives of another 20,000 people. 6-8

- Effects on a person's physical and mental health over time: Heavy drinking, for example, has been linked to hypertension, liver disease, and cancer; regular marijuana use has been linked to chronic bronchitis; and stimulant usage, such as cocaine, has been linked to heart disease. 11-13 Furthermore, substance abuse during pregnancy can have long-term health consequences for the baby, such as foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), which affect 2 to 5% of the population^{14,15} and neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS); the ongoing opioid crisis has resulted in a five-fold increase in the number of babies who are opioid-dependent at birth. 14
- Indirect effects of dangerous behaviours that frequently accompany alcohol and drug abuse: Misuse of alcohol and drugs can impair judgement, resulting in risky behaviours such as driving while intoxicated (DUI), unprotected sex, and needle/syringe sharing. Thousands of people die each year as a result of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and 10.6 percent of drivers admit to doing so each year. 1 As the overuse of some substances, such as prescription opioids, worsens, many people seek to heighten the high by injecting them, and sharing needles among users can lead to HIV and hepatitis outbreaks.
- Longer-term societal consequences: These can include decreased productivity, increased health-care costs, unintended pregnancies, the spread of infectious disease, drug-related crime, interpersonal violence, family stress, and a variety of other direct and indirect effects on communities, the economy, and society.

Type of drugs

Cigarette

Nicotine, found in tobacco, is a highly addictive chemical. Any medication that is smoked swiftly reaches the brain. After inhaling tobacco smoke, nicotine only takes 8 to 10 seconds to reach the brain. Smokers can become addicted rapidly, and quitting might take years and a lot of work.

Alcohol

One of the most extensively used drugs on the planet is alcohol. Alcohol is a controlled substance. Alcohol is classed as a depressant of the Central Nervous System (CNS), which implies that it slows down brain function, neural activity, and the functioning of different critical functions in the body.

Alcoholism is a chronic disease marked by an insatiable desire for alcohol, as well as compulsive or difficult-to-control drinking despite negative personal or professional repercussions. In the United States, alcohol is the most often used addictive substance. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) estimates that 17.6 million persons in the United States suffer from alcohol use disorders or chronic alcohol misuse.

Alcohol addiction is both physical and psychological. In terms of the physical aspect of addiction, alcohol causes the release of endorphins and dopamine, both of which induce euphoric sensations such as pleasure. Many people who consume are unaware that it can create physical changes in the chemistry and functioning of the brain.

Alcohol has fewer negative consequences when taken recreationally and in small doses; nevertheless, when consumed in high quantities, especially over short periods of time, there are numerous concerns to be aware of. An alcohol overdose, also known as alcohol poisoning, occurs when a person consumes too much alcohol.

Globally, alcohol and tobacco are the most serious hazards to human health, but the dangers of illegal drugs "don't even come close.

Illicit drugs

Illicit drugs include compounds that are highly addictive and illegal, such as heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine. While using one of these substances for the first time is usually a voluntary decision, an unforeseen addiction might make quitting later much more difficult. as well as the non-medical use of legally available pharmaceuticals like pain relievers and sleeping pills.

What are the harms from using illicit drugs?

Using illicit drugs can lead to health problems including

- injury
- chronic disease (heart and liver problems)
- blood-borne viruses (infections like hepatitis and HIV)
- lower levels of social and emotional wellbeing (mental health problems)
- increased risk of suicide.

Nearly half of college students use illicit drugs.

Teen drug use is common among college students. In 2016, 45 percent of male college students and 42 percent of female college students used an illegal drug.

The Top Five Reasons for Teen Drug Abuse

Peer pressure and social influence

Escape or self-medication

Academic or performance pressure

Coping with trauma, anxiety, depression or another underlying mental health issue

Media influences: Studies show that teens who watch movies that depict smoking or alcohol consumption are more likely to engage in those behaviors themselves.

Risk of Illicit drugs

Importing narcotics is considered a serious offence that can result in a lengthy prison sentence. Crimes of this sort are regarded as serious since they are frequently linked to professional drug dealers. These activities are also believed to be at the heart of the illegal drug trade, as they sell vast quantities of drugs to smaller drug traffickers, who then distribute them across the UK.

What Are Central Nervous System Depressants?

Drugs that slow down brain activity are known as central nervous system (CNS) depressants, and they can be used to treat a variety of disorders. These medications work by altering the neurotransmitter gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), which causes sleepiness, relaxation, and a reduction in inhibition.

Insomnia, anxiety, panic attacks, stress, sleep difficulties, pain, and seizures are among conditions that are treated with central nervous system depressants. Sedatives, hypnotics, and tranquillizers are the three main categories of CNS depressants.

Amphetamines, methylphenidate, atomoxetine, modafinil, armodafinil, pitolisant, and solriamfetol are central nervous system stimulants used to treat attention deficit disorder, narcolepsy, and excessive drowsiness.

Further notes

On a daily basis, mental health specialists who interact with teenagers see the link between depression and substance addiction. They know how intimately mental health and substance use are linked through their interactions with teenagers.

Depending on whether the data being accessed is public or generated for profit reasons, using pre-existing data on a given topic can save time and money (Bryman, and Bell, 2015). (Saunders et al., 2003). However, because the data may not be directly relevant to the research issue, the generalizability of the data acquired may be questioned (Wilson, 2014).

When it comes to medicines, there are numerous risks and concerns to consider. To completely comprehend potential risks and dangers, consider the medicine, set, and context.

People over-exerting themselves while consuming ecstasy is another setting hazard. Ecstasy is a stimulant that is commonly used in clubs to keep people dancing nonstop for lengthy periods of time. In extreme cases, people have danced nonstop for hours in hot, crowded conditions. They risk becoming dehydrated and suffering from heat exhaustion. This can be quite harmful in some situations, and it has resulted in several deaths.

Furthermore, people may have problems with drug usage as a result of other people's perceptions and reactions to them. Conflict in family and other personal relationships, being expelled from school/college/work, receiving a criminal record, going into debt to pay for drugs, violence related with drug distribution, and so on are examples.

Observations and experiments may also be conducted to verify or disprove whether cannabis potentiates psychosis. By bringing evidence together, new theories and ideologies may be established, and legal changes can be enacted — this is an example of an inductive method (Greener, 2008). Furthermore, an interpretivist methodological stance will be used to comprehend the complexities of everyone being tracked.

Public opinions on cannabis

According to a poll, there are now twice as many adults in the UK who support cannabis legalisation as those who oppose it, revealing a "widening divide" between popular opinion and drug regulations.

According to the YouGov poll, 48% of Americans support legalising marijuana for recreational use, up five percentage points from last year, with only 24% against.

As will be seen, marijuana legalisation is not a public policy issue that lends itself to a shallow or simplistic argument. It necessitates the deconstruction and examination of an order that has been noticeably lacking despite the constant attention it receives. There has been no detailed study of the operational meaning of legalisation beyond some very broadly defined ideas. There isn't even a common set of terms that would allow for an intellectually rigorous discourse.

A meaningful debate about drug legalisation that accepts the inescapable difficulties and uncertainties is long overdue. Not only would it deter people from making the types of casual, if not flippant, claims—both for and against legalization—that have characterised earlier debates over the issue. However, it may prompt a broader and more critical examination of current UK drug control strategies and priorities.

Legalization appears to be an appealing alternative to today's prohibitionist policies based on a variety of grounds. Legalization might eliminate or at least dramatically lessen the same

problems that generate the most public concern: the criminality, corruption, and violence that accompany the operation of illicit drug markets, in addition to undercutting the black-market incentives to manufacture and sell narcotics.

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Adrian Barton

Adrian Barton : Illicit Drugs: Use and control

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FINAL GRADE

40/100

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