

Smoking: epidemiology and immediate outright ban essay

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Cigarettes contain over 500 poisons which cause smoking related illnesses such as bronchitis, emphysema, diseases of the heart liver, vascular and lung, birth problems, cancer of the lip, tongue, gum, larynx bladder and lung, peptic ulcers, jaundice and strokes (see Appendice 2). Persistent smoker's teeth and fingernails are yellow. Research shows that every cigarette smoked equates to taking approximately fourteen minutes off your life. There is no known cure for cancer, and the treatments available are far from perfect.

It is a detriment to our society to put your own life at risk by doing this for no good reason (see Appendice 3). The younger a person begins to smoke, the greater the risk of them developing smoking related illnesses. Therefore, if a person begins to smoke when they are young and smoke throughout their teenage years they will be unfit and vulnerable to disease for the rest of their lives. Society is damaged by this as illness means that people interact less. Our Service Can Write a Custom Essay on Banning Smoking for You! Passive smoking, the inhalation of smoke from a cigarette that another person has smoked, causes many problems such as asthma, headaches and an increased risk of heart and lung cancer.

This means that people who do not smoke can still get smoking related diseases. Even if people have the right to do what they wish, they cannot have the right to harm others, inadvertently or not. Smoking imposes a huge monetary cost upon society in two main ways. Firstly, through absenteeism from work as a result of health problems, this is bad for the economy and society. If the economy is in bad shape then people spend less money and go out less, therefore they interact less. If people interact less then society

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begins to stagnate. Secondly, smoking is a drain on the National Health Service, through the cost arising from treating smokers and also those who suffer from the effects of passive smoking. Patients who smoke are unnecessary because they could have decided not to smoke and thus prevented the disease.

Also, patients with passive smoking diseases are totally unnecessary as they did nothing to increase their health risks. On the whole smoking is bad for the NHS which has a knock on effect on society because if people are ill then they cannot interact as much as when they are fit. The time and money spent on these patients could be spent researching incurable diseases and better equipment.

This is not good for society as it means that its people do not have adequate health services and thus live shorter lives, which is no help at all to society. I handed out a questionnaire (see Appendice 1) to twenty people at random and asked them to fill it in. Out of the twenty people four smoked.

This indicates that there a noticeable proportion of people who smoke in our society. Fourteen people thought that smoking should be banned in all public places and a further four though it should be banned completely. This shows that a ban on smoking in all public places might be popular but a complete ban would be unpopular.

4 people found smoking disgusting, 9 found it mildly annoying, 4 had no problem with it and 3 found it agreeable. This indicates that a larger proportion of the population does not like smoking; indeed, one of the

smokers did not like smoking. Overall, these results indicate that a partial ban on smoking would be more popular than a complete one. The results also indicate that the majority of people do not like smoking; I consider this to be a good thing for society. People have the right to do as they please so long as they do not break the law. By that reasoning people should be allowed to smoke in public. This is a fair argument so long as there is no law against smoking. My questionnaire indicates that many people think that there should be a partial ban on smoking.

This therefore nullifies the libertarian argument as it is debatable whether people should have the right to smoke. Against this, however, some would argue that banning smoking would be a detraction from people's rights and therefore morally wrong. Thus we should not ban smoking in public places. Also, if other people don't like smoking, they should leave the vicinity of the smoker; it is the individual's choice whether or not they smoke, therefore it should also be the individual's choice whether or not to leave.

However this begs the question, why should the person doing the damage have priority? Smoking generates large amounts of money through taxation, admittedly smoking cost the National Health Service, yet the NHS is not a business run for profit. The purpose of the NHS is to keep the nation healthy, not to intrude upon the rights of the individual. There can be no argument against the NHS persuading people not to smoke, yet it is still the right of the individual to decide whether or not they wish to smoke. Some groups argue that there is no definitive proof that smoking causes cancer. This is strictly true. "With smoking" many laboratory investigations "have proved"

problematic, and science has not “ been able to” explain with certainty the “ findings linking smoking and certain diseases” and “ to clarify the role of particular smoke constituents in these diseases. As this is strictly true it can be argued that there is no absolute proof that smoking causes disease and therefore there is no justification in banning it until there is definite proof.

However this begs the question, is it worth the risk just because the proof is not concrete? This argument is, to some extent, nullified by epidemiological research. “ Epidemiological studies” show that groups of – smokers have far higher incidence of certain diseases than? groups of non-smokers. These risks tend to be greater in groups that start smoking younger, smoke for longer, smoke more cigarettes per day and? smoke high tar cigarettes compared to those who consume less tar. ” This shows that although there is no direct proof of the link between smoking and certain diseases there are many indications that smoking is the cause of smoking related diseases. Based completely upon medical, biological and chemical reasoning I would ban smoking completely. Ethically, however, I do not believe it is right to completely ban something without a national referendum or something similar. Also I think that an immediate outright ban on the sale of all tobacco products would drive it underground and therefore give it a sort of prestige.

Finally I also believe that such a ban would not work as too many people do it and thus it would have to be a series of bans and the like. This is actually visible in government policy with the gradual banning of all tobacco advertisements. I think that smoking should be banned in public places so as to facilitate a significant lowering in social smoking and passive smoking and

could lead to higher levels of banning and a gradual reduction in the number of people who smoke in our society.