

Drug effects essay



Alcohol and marijuana are two drugs commonly used and abused in the United States. Alcohol is the number one abused drug, while marijuana is number one among illegal drugs. While alcohol remains legal, and marijuana illegal, this does not necessarily mean that the alcohol is better for you.

There have been many arguments where people suggest that marijuana should be legal because alcohol is more deadly. On the other hand, there are alcoholics who would tell a pothead that smoking weed is bad for you. Both substances are very bad for your health and should not be heavily used by anyone.

Marijuana has an immediate effect during and for about 2 hours after smoking. With alcohol, users feel slight effects after just one drink, and recover depending on the amount the person drank, how much they weigh, and how much they had to eat before ingesting the alcohol. Immediate effects of use are slurred speech, decreased inhibitions, poor judgment, and lack of motor coordination.

Marijuana causes red eyes, dry mouth, increased appetite, slowed reaction, paranoia, hallucinations, decreased social inhibitions, and memory loss.

Drinking heavy amounts of alcohol can lead to a coma or even death. A person would have to smoke 40, 000 times the amount to get high to overdose, so it is practically impossible. Alcohol is responsible for over 100, 000 deaths per year.

Marijuana kills less than 10, 000 per year.

Among the deaths caused by alcohol, drinking and driving is number one. Not only is it number one among alcohol related deaths, it is also one of the main causes of death and injury in the United States. Alcohol impairs judgment and vision, and causes speeding and reckless driving.

On the other hand, there has been debate over the effect of marijuana on driving. One study by a computer software company reported that people who smoked a small amount of marijuana drove faster and with fewer collisions in a driving computer game. Another study said that marijuana causes abnormally slow driving, proneness to distraction, and increases the time it takes to react, therefore greatly impairs your ability to drive.

Long-term effects of alcohol are liver cirrhosis, stomach ailments, impotence, vitamin deficiency, increased stroke risk, decreased mental performance, heart disease, peptic ulcers, hepatitis, and various forms of cancer.

Alcohol's effects on the brain are loss of coordination, poor judgment, slowed reflexes, distorted vision, memory lapses, and even blackouts. Long-term effects of marijuana are mouth, throat, and lung cancer, increased heart rate, decrease in testosterone levels for men, increased testosterone levels for women, diminished sexual pleasure, increased blood pressure, increased stress, decreased motivation, and respiratory problems. The THC in marijuana damages the nerve cells in the part of the brain where memories are formed, making it hard to remember things.

Both substances can lead to dependence, especially alcohol. If one abuses alcohol for too long and becomes dependent, they are considered to be an alcoholic.

There has been debate on whether marijuana is addictive. Some experts believe that since there are no obvious withdrawal symptoms, it is not considered to be an addictive drug. Others claim that it is addictive because it takes the place of natural feel good chemicals in the brain, so people become physically addicted. Alcoholism on the other hand, is considered a disease. Ten percent of people who drink will become alcoholics.

There seems to be a genetic factor associated with alcoholism. Biological children of alcoholics have a greater chance of becoming alcoholics themselves than a child who is adopted into a family with a history of alcoholism.

If an alcoholic abruptly stops drinking, he will go through withdrawal symptoms known as alcohol withdrawal syndrome. The symptoms are nausea, tremors, sweating, anxiety, depression, weakness, hallucinations, and even death. Despite the talk about alcohol abuse and alcoholism, alcohol can actually be good for you. If one drinks in moderation (2-6 drinks per week in two or more sittings) it can lessen the chance of heart disease by thinning your blood.

There are no known health benefits associated with moderate marijuana use. Both drugs have serious health effects when used heavily, but it seems that alcohol more detrimental to your health.