

Helping epileptic children: a case for the legalization of marijuana essay sample...

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Marijuana has always carried a negative reputation due to its recreational use and the “stoner” stereotype that comes with those who use it. Many people use the drug illegally to get high or stoned for their own pleasure. Marijuana is made from the leaves of the cannabis plant, which are then ground and smoked in various ways, such as through a pipe or a rolled joint. The earliest known use of cannabis drugs dates as far back as the ancient Greek and Roman societies. It has traditionally been used as a recreational drug, but modern times have changed.

In recent years, the drug has caused a crossroads among medical experts and health professionals. This is due to research that has proven that marijuana is beneficial for those suffering from certain medical conditions such as cancer, seizures and multiple sclerosis. Studies have shown that marijuana is especially effective for easing pain, specifically neuropathic pain. Thus it has been suggested that its use can help treat brain injury. It has also been used to help people who have eating disorders or have trouble eating due to chemotherapy treatments or AIDS, as a common side effect from its use is the “munchies”- the user becomes hungry and feels the need to eat. In addition, marijuana is beneficial for anxiety and insomnia.

Unfortunately, the legalization of medicinal marijuana has not yet reached the entire country. This is a shame, as so many children could be easing their pain and suffering if it were more widely accepted. This topic has divided the nation and its levels of government. Children should not be suffering at such a young and vulnerable age. Seizures in particular are harmful to and common among children as they can cause serious brain damage and other physical damage, and in serious cases they can have a

harmful effect on a child's growth and development. Since there is no indication when it is going to happen, a child does not know when they are going to suffer a seizure. This causes serious limitations for their lives, as it affects everything they do. If one has a seizure at the wrong time, for example while they are swimming, there could be fatal consequences. Teachers and parents of epileptic children have extra responsibility as some children can suffer hundreds of seizures a day. Seizures are caused by abnormal electrical discharges in the child's brain, something that marijuana can help with due to its previously mentioned benefits for neurological pain. The state of Colorado was the first state to legalize marijuana. This has altered the quality of life for everyone living there, as many studies have shown that crime rates have gone down, the economy has improved, and people now have access to medicinal marijuana to ease their suffering. It is in this state that one can access Charlotte's Web, a strain of marijuana that dramatically reduces seizures in children with epilepsy. It is taken as an oil and contains less amounts of the chemical THC, which is the chemical in marijuana that makes users high. Charlotte's Web was named for a child named Charlotte Figi, who suffered from epilepsy. She was having hundreds of seizures a week, the majority of which were very violent. Charlotte's family tried many options that all failed before they tried medicinal marijuana. Once Charlotte began using marijuana in the form of low-THC cannabis oil, her seizures decreased to only a few a week. Families have had to pack up their lives and move to Colorado to access Charlotte's Web. This can take a serious toll on everyone involved, financially and emotionally. In Georgia, a bill to legalize low-THC cannabis oil for medicinal use against

epilepsy is currently underway. This bill was inspired by Haleigh Cox, a five year old epileptic child, and is known as “ Haleigh’s Hope Act.” Haleigh Cox was suffering hundreds of seizures a day and her epilepsy medicine was not helping her condition. Her parents were told by their doctor that Haleigh would probably not live another three months, so they made the tough decision to move the family to Colorado, where they could access cannabis oil legally. When Haleigh began a regimen using the cannabis oil her health increased dramatically and she made a full recovery. The family will be able to move back to their hometown when the bill passes.

Arguments against marijuana contain accusations that the drug is a “ gateway drug” and could lead to the use of harder drugs such as cocaine or heroin. However, one could argue that there are many substances that could lead to hard drug use, and some of those are legal, such as alcohol. Many people who are alcoholics become users of hard drugs. Tobacco is a legal drug that is arguably worse for one’s health than marijuana. Tobacco causes cancer, heart defects, emphysema, and countless other serious health problems. It is also significantly more addicting than marijuana, which is considerably more dangerous.

With all of the benefits that come from medicinal marijuana it is hard to see why a state would be unwilling to provide their citizens with legal access to the drug. States are willing to legalize gambling, alcohol, tobacco and other addicting recreational activities, yet they will not touch something that helps innocent children who are in pain. If medicinal marijuana were legal across the United States so many people, children and adults alike, would suffer less. Children are meant to live their lives with the ability to play outside and

discover the world around them, not lying in a hospital bed for their entire childhood. Their lives are still ahead of them, and something that is treatable should be available to them at all times, everywhere.