

Rebuttal Paper For Drug Use In Academics

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Introduction

_____ During the debate, our group was defending the use of cognitive enhancement in academics. We used an example enhancement of a substance that can increase memory retention rate, which we referred to as Substance X. Our central argument was that our society is constantly evolving, and this evolution requires higher levels of cognitive function. By using cognitive enhancements, students in higher education can gain more from their studying efforts, and potentially retain this knowledge at a much higher rate. This improved efficiency in college, can lead to an increase in high-quality job applicants after graduating from their institution.

Claims

The opposing team's central argument is that the drug would do all of the work for the student and decrease the overall value of education. The claim that the value of education would decrease was backed by the idea that individuals would not have a sense of achievement/accomplishment in completing their schoolwork. Fairness was a key ethical question that they used. They stated that it would be unfair to individuals who were not taking the drug. Also that individuals not using it would feel peer pressured to use it so they wouldn't fall behind others in their class. Because students would be getting "smarter," there was also a claim that to make up for this professors would compensate by making tests harder. One of their last claims was that students should only use this drug if they have an underlying health condition. While some of their claims are well-intentioned, they did not provide sufficient evidence to back them up effectively.

Counter-Claims

_____ The argument that the drug would be doing all of the work for the student is unfounded. As stated, Substance X is not a wonder drug; it is simply a memory retention aid. It will not do

the work for the student. The notion that the value of education would decrease is an irrelevant argument because the students who are using the drug will still have to study in order to enjoy the benefits of the drug. Contradictory to their claim, the issue of fairness with this drug would not be as widespread as they say it would be, as this substance would be widely available to anyone who wanted to use it. Any “unfairness” would be as a result of students choosing not to take this substance. As for the peer pressure aspect, as this would be a substance mainly used in college and higher education, peer pressure would not be as significant of a driving force in decision making as it would if the environment was a high school. The argument that professors would make tests/quizzes harder holds little water. Professors in colleges and universities would not suddenly start to make tests more difficult in response to an enhancement substance coming onto the market. Finally, the claim that only students with underlying health conditions should take it is contradictory to the entire argument, as in that situation, it would be classified as therapy, not enhancement.

Argument Supporting Us

_____The first ethical question to support our arguments is the question of Liberty. The principles of freedom and personal autonomy apply here when choosing whether or not to take a substance such as Substance X (Outram, 2010). The second ethical question supporting this paper is the question of Fairness. The use of this substance in an academic environment has the potential to make the “playing field” more fair as the students who were falling behind would be able to perform at levels commensurate to students who were performing well. The third and final ethical question to support our arguments is the question of Outcomes. The potential positive future outcomes that can result from students taking Substance X include better grades,

less time and money spent on college, and a higher valued workforce coming into the market, and heavily outweigh any negative potential outcomes.

Conclusion

Our central argument was that our society is constantly evolving and therefore we need higher levels of cognitive function. The opposing team's main argument centralized around the idea that the drug would do all work and decrease the value of education. The opposition also argued that the ethical question of Fairness was in jeopardy, claiming that students that do not take the enhancement will be at a disadvantage. We argue that cognitive enhancements do not do the work for the students, the students will still have to put in effort to study. The enhancement simply allows the student to gain more from studying. Contradictory to their claim about fairness, we fail to see any issues with fairness. It is up to the student to decide if they will take the enhancement or not, which does not violate the question of fairness. The principles of freedom and personal autonomy apply here when choosing whether or not to take a substance such as Substance X, which supports the ethical question of Liberty.

References

Outram, S. (2010). The use of methylphenidate among students: The future of enhancement?

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