

Current and Past Drug Trends

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The current and past drugs trends in the United States are significant to society. The use of drugs affects citizens across the nation, whether using drugs or not using drugs. The strength of each drug potentially could help people with severe pains, mild pains, psychological problems, and addiction. However, the same drugs could destroy people lives, murder, and create a financial burden for citizens living in United States. As the world turns and times seems difficult, people will use different avenues to promote their product. The American people will encourage drug use in any form of advertisement. People in today's society have accepted this part of history.

Past Drug Trends: Marijuana, Amphetamine, Cocaine, LSD, Opiates

The history of drugs in United States dates back to the early 1600s with the settlers of Jamestown. Settlers began growing hemp plant or cannabis sativa because of the strong fiber it produced. The plants were so strong that settlers made clothes, sails, and rope. The United States main source of revenue was marijuana, which typically only lasted through the duration of the Civil War. Plantation flourished across the nation in states such as California, Georgia, Mississippi, Nebraska, and South Carolina. Marijuana use grew rapidly throughout the U.S. between the years of 1850 and 1937. This particular drug was available at pharmacies or could be purchased from general stores. "The increasing use of marijuana by mainstream white American help lead to the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970, under which mandatory penalties for drug offenses were repealed by congress and marijuana was categorized separately from other narcotics"(A Social History of American's Most Popular Drugs 2010). Although marijuana was considered an illegal substance, the government still allowed doctors or physicians to use it as medicine. For example, if a person was suffering from

pain, nausea, cancer, muscle spasm, or symptoms of AIDs, then the doctor could prescribe marijuana as medicine.

Amphetamine

The drug Amphetamine was introduced in 1887. This particular substance became popular in the 1920s. Doctors and war physicians would prescribe amphetamines to soldiers or people for endurance, combat fatigue, raise blood pressure, stimulate the central nervous system, enlarge nasal passages, and depression. The abuse of amphetamines began in the 1930s, when it was sold over the counter as an inhaler under the name Benzedrine. “Common users of illicit amphetamines included truck drivers on long commutes and athletes looking for better performance” (A Social History of America’s Most Popular Drugs 2010). Students who were attending school gave the drug a name “pep pills” because it allowed them to stay up late studying. Also, between the 1950s and 1960s, people began injecting amphetamines.

Cocaine

“Cocaine was derived from the coca plant native to the Andean highlands of South America” (A Social History of America’s Most Popular Drug 2010). John Pemberton, a native of Atlanta, Georgia, marketed Coca-Cola in 1886. The product ingredients he used contained Africa kola nuts and coca leaves. However, cocaine is derived from the coca leaf plant. Up until 1914, across the United States, stores sold cocaine over the counter. This particular drug was used in chocolate tablets, patent medicines, tonics, and toothache cures. Cocaine was also used in surgical procedures to numb an specific area of pain. However, in the 1970’s this substance was used for recreational. In fact, journalist wrote articles claiming that cocaine was not addictive. The media and United States citizens viewed this drug as harmless until crack emerges into the streets in 1985. “Crack cocaine is a free-based form of cocaine made by cooking cocaine

powder, water, and baking soda until it forms a solid that can be broken down and sold in individual rocks” (A Social History of America’s Most Popular Drugs 2010). People from poor neighborhoods and working class citizens began using crack cocaine because it was not as expensive as powdered cocaine.

LSD

Doctor Albert Hofman was a Swiss chemist who accidentally discovered LSD. Through his experiments with this substance, he provided samples to psychiatrist at the University of Zurich for more testing. The CIA and the United States Military called LSD the “truth drug”. When the prisoners were held captive, LSD was given to them for the purpose of extracting information. “However, after military interest in LSD wane in favor of other drugs, the psychiatric community began to research and issue reports on the drug’s possible therapeutic capabilities for psychotic, epileptic, and depressed patient” (A Social History of America’s Most Popular Drugs 2010). LSD was used by rock and roll groups and people of that same culture.

Opiates, Opium, and Heroin

Opiates were first brought to the United States by Chinese laborers. This particular drug was popular in the 19th century. Morphine, which contains opiates, was given to soldiers during the Civil War as a pain reliever. In the early part of the 1900s, heroin was supposed to be the solution for morphine addicts. Instead, heroin addicts grew rapidly and the problem with opiates still existed. Most heroin users came from up north.

Modern Drugs in Today’s Society: Prescription Drugs, Over-the-Counter

Prescription drugs are the primary substance use among American citizens in today’s society. “According to the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, drugs are substances intend for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease” (Carroll 2000). However, the

most prescribe drugs for the year of 1998 were Premarin Oral, Synthroid, Trimax, Hydrocodone/APAP, Prozac, Prilosec, Zithromax, Lipitor, and Norvasc. Although the list above was in the top 10, maybe one or two are being abused. Hydrocodone is a pain reliever that's abused by American citizens. This particular substance is classified as a narcotic analgesic with acetaminophen.

Viagra is another popular prescribe drug among men with erectile dysfunction and men without. "Viagra does not cause penile erection but increases the muscle relaxant effects of chemical nitric oxide, which allow blood to flow into the penis, causing an erection" (Carroll, 2000). This particular drug is being abused by men of all ages.

Over-the-Counter Drugs

Over-the-counter drugs are used widely in the United States. The self medication drug can be beneficial, but some people tend to abuse the substance. Some example of over-the-counter drugs are Allergy relief products, Analgesics, Anorectal products, Antacids, Antibacterial and antiseptics, Appetite suppressant, Arthritis medication, cold preparation, contraceptives, and cough preparations. Sleep aids are over-the-counter drugs that are being abused. Millions of Americans depend on sleep aids to go to sleep at night. Some example of sleep aids are Nytol, Nervine, Compoz, Advil PM, Tylenol PM, and Excedrin PM. All over-the-counter drugs have a potential serious health threat. Most OTC medication may cause liver damage if abused.

"Substance abuse is the nation's top health problem, causing more death, illness and disabilities than any other preventable health problem today" (Macdonald, 2001). The number of deaths that occur in the United States is estimated to be two million. One out of four deaths in

United States is caused by tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs. The burden of those acts cost U.S. citizens 414 billion dollars a year.

Movies, advertising, and media programming are some avenues Americans promote drug use. Magazines, newspapers, and billboards are some example advertising. In magazines, prescription drugs are advertised throughout the entire book. Television programs and movie scripts is another way that American encourages drug use and abuse. For example, the movie with Cheech and Chong, the use of marijuana was promoted throughout the whole movie.

The comparison between current drugs and past drugs are different. In the 1900s, drugs were smoked, snorted, or injected into the body. The modern drugs in today's society come in the form of a pill or liquid. Drugs that come in the form of a pill are prescribed or over the counter. The risk of going in rough neighborhoods is eliminated. In past situations, people had to go in rough areas to obtain their drugs.

Conclusion

In the United States of America, drugs from the past and modern drugs are polluting the streets. People of all ages and nationality are doing drugs. Most drugs were put on this earth to help people. If the rules are being broken concerning drugs, then a price has to be paid. If people stay within the guidelines of their medication, then everything will be alright. I strongly suggest that further research is done on this topic.

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