

Legalize Cheating?

Victoria Edwards, Grade 12, Germantown Academy

Tom is one of the two million children in the United States who have been diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), an illness caused by a chemical imbalance in key areas of the brain. Without treatment he will suffer from side effects that will make his school and home life almost intolerable. As a result, he and other patients are allowed to take certain medicines, such as psychostimulants, that increase the levels of their neurotransmitters that are essential for them to maintain attention and focus in normal life settings. Therefore, these medications are necessary for ADHD patients to obtain the same levels of excellence as those without the disorder. So then why should we permit those without any learning disorders to consume these brain-enhancing drugs? Tom has to take the medication in order to function the same way that those without the disorder can naturally, so if we allow these other students to take the medication as well, that defeats the purpose of trying to put Tom on their learning level because he would still have to take excess amounts of the drug to be on the same level as the enhanced normal brains. Doesn't Tom have the same rights as the other children to learn and prosper without the distractions his brain creates for him? These stimulants were made for normalizing disadvantaged brains, not enhancing already intelligent and completely useful ones, "The original purpose of medicine is to heal the sick, not turn healthy people into gods" (Carey). Such enhancement should not only be seen as immoral but as cheating because it is giving an unfair advantage to

students who are perfectly capable of prospering on their natural brain-power.

Therefore, enhancement is wrong.

Children diagnosed with ADHD are missing the chemicals in their brains that are responsible for arranging thought patterns and without enough of these chemicals the organizing centers of their brains do not work efficiently. This causes side effects such as difficulty following instructions, keeping attention on work or activities at school or home, appearing not to listen, trouble with tasks that require planning ahead, not paying attention to details and many other frustrating tribulations, thus dealing with ADHD on regular basis is not an easy task. Also, even though the enhancement drugs do help with subduing the effects of the disability they come with serious side effects of their own. For example, the side effects of the main psychostimulants are decreased appetite, difficulty sleeping, and increased anxiety, so even when these children are medicated they still have to deal with other discomforting issues that may affect their learning capability. It is also strongly advised that the children who are diagnosed and on medication receive psychosocial counseling to help them cope with their disability and effectively manage the symptoms. Hence, ADHD is a legitimate disability that requires medicinal functionality for most of its patients in order to behave and learn the same way as everyone else.

According to Professor Bishop,

“An education is much more than just learning facts. And it's more than mastering the ability to solve problems, to understand complicated issues, to detect bullshit (sophistry), and to articulate your views. A quality education requires a commitment to an ever deeper understanding of self and of one's place in the social and natural world;

and when successful, it leads to a critical examination of the assumptions that guide one's life.”

For students who are more than capable of learning and obtaining this type of education without medications but are too lazy to put in the time and effort, something is seriously amiss. These students not only no longer see the value in education and working for what they acquire, which is a morality issue in itself, but they are seeking an unfair advantage over other honest students. Also, providing the stimulants to those without the disorder would “raise the standard of what is considered ‘normal’ performance and widen the gap between those who have access to the medications and those who don’t- and even erode the relationship between struggle and the building of character” (Carey). Allowing this cheating would provide easier ways of learning for the fortunate and leave those who cannot afford the medication deeper in oppression because job competition would become even fiercer and even less opportunities would be presented. Further more, the medicine that was created to enhance deprived brain functionality would lose its purpose because “history predicts that greater availability will lead to an increase in diversion, misuse, and abuse” of the medication. Therefore, the use of brain stimulants as an enhancer by perfectly functioning and healthy students should be viewed as wrong.

In conclusion, the use of brain stimulators on well operating brains is

wrong because it provides the user with an unfair advantage, widens the gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots,” encourages the misuse of medication, and devalues the importance of effort in American society. A drug that was made for stabilizing disadvantaged brains should not be used for the selfish pleasure of those who only want to heighten their perfectly functioning ones.

Works Cited

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