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The study that was conducted examined the perceptions and the relationship college athletes have towards marijuana. As time progresses and more people become used to the idea of marijuana being fully legalized in the United States, institutions like the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) will have to deal with the fact that a vast majority of their college athletes use marijuana regardless of it being on the banned substance list. A survey that featured 14 questions was sent out to over 200 male and female student athletes at St. John Fisher College which 60 of the 200 agreed to partake in. The results of the survey revealed that 77% of the student athletes regularly used or have tried marijuana in the past. Another perception the study revealed was that 80% of the survey participants believed that 25%-75% of their teammates used marijuana on a regular basis while 88% of the participants believed 50%-100% of their teammates have at least tried marijuana once in their lives. The implications of these findings revealed that the NCAA are not as aware of the prevalence of marijuana usage among their student athletes as it appeared. The results of this study are important because the student athletes' stance on marijuana is understood rather than that from coaches or NCAA officials. If the NCAA is out for the best interest of the student athletes than it's crucial for this demographic to be fully understood in all aspects.

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Introduction

Recently in the last couple of decades, marijuana has gradually become more prevalent among households and has been used towards treating people with disabilities and injuries for medicinal purposes. Marijuana is already fully legal in the states of Colorado, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska as well as medically legal in over 20 states (Cerda, 2012). As time progresses and more people become used to the idea of marijuana being fully legalized in the United States, institutions like the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) will have to eventually deal with the fact that marijuana continues to be on the banned substances list with the likes of alcohol and caffeine even though a large amount of their student athletes continue to use them.

The research that was conducted explored how college athletes themselves, viewed the characteristics of marijuana specifically and whether or not they believed it should remain on the banned substances list. A survey was created that was given out to a local college athletic teams, that asked the individual players on a confidential level various questions pertaining to marijuana and their own perceptions and experiences with it. This study gave a first-hand account of what some NCAA athletes thought about the current issue rather than what a coach or NCAA official thought about it. By giving a first-hand insight towards how college athletes feel about the subject, this study should expand the horizon of knowledge for NCAA officials and school administrators towards understanding the topic more superiorly.

The purpose of this study was to explore what the athletes themselves thought about marijuana in general, instead of hearing the traditional voices from school administrators or NCAA officials who normally oppose it. This research could be used to understand the side of

the players more clearly rather than the administrators' or NCAA officials' who continually speak on behalf of the players. The research question that created the foundation of this study was:

What perceptions do college athletes have towards marijuana?

This study further expanded the horizon of knowledge researchers had towards marijuana and how it impacted student-athletes. Not only was this study beneficial for all parties associated with the issue, but also allowed the student-athletes to be heard in a world where people rarely asked for their opinions. This study is to be used to further understand why and how student athletes' are fascinated and interested in the illegal drug of marijuana.

Literature Review

Effects of Marijuana-

Tuyp (2013) explored the negative short term and long term effects that marijuana can have on one's mind and body. There were already a number of scientific negative risks that have been proven and established against marijuana that include: respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, psychotic illness, and motor vehicle accidents. The article went into detail how heavy marijuana users' rate of such accidents or diseases occurring increased immensely the more one uses the substance. The article retrieved past scientific statistics of diseases and motor vehicle accidents to compare and contrast the differences and similarities between heavy marijuana users and casual users. This article was ultimately important because it

gave a perspective to the negative consequences that heavy marijuana usage can have upon the body.

Schoeler (2013) examined the scientific relationship that marijuana had on an individual's short-term and long-term memory functions. The authors specifically conducted research on adolescents who started using marijuana at a young age, and chronic users who had used it over a long period of time. The studies that were conducted resulted in relatively consistent findings that memory functions are in fact affected negatively during the time of intoxication from individuals using marijuana. The article also noted that negative effects can be found after when regular or chronic marijuana users practice abstinence for a certain amount of time from the drug. This article gave scientific evidence of the effects marijuana had on memory functions that can impact it negatively.

Cousijn (2011) explored the relationship that a heavy marijuana user has with the tendency to go back and approach drug related stimuli. The authors studied 32 heavy users and 39 non-smokers through specifically designed tests and questionnaires. After which, the test subjects were assessed once more after 6 months. The authors found that heavy users with a high bias tendency towards marijuana are more likely to increase their usage; however, no evidence could be found determining whether or not heavy users developed a dependency towards the drug. This article is important because it gives an in-depth insight as to whether or not marijuana can be addicting, which is a common case made by people in favor of keeping marijuana on the banned substance list. The article concluded that even though marijuana may have had a mental influence that's results in heavy users wanting to continually use it, there is no evidence that suggested that it is physically addicting only mentally.

Chatwin (2013) focused on the perspective of current lifelong marijuana users rather than focused on the perspective of medical physicians or scholars. 23 interviews were conducted with individuals who were 35 years of age, had been using marijuana for at least 15 years, and who continued to use it on a weekly basis. The findings suggested that lifelong users failed to show signs of typical addiction narratives, and instead were able to use the drug in a responsible and controlled manner. Other findings suggested that the medical benefits that marijuana brings were the ultimate factor in using the drug rather than the pleasure marijuana created. The biggest negative affect that the users found were the criminal consequences that using marijuana brought rather than the physical factors marijuana has on the body. This source is crucial because it gave a first-hand insight into why users use marijuana and to also give a perspective from the other side of the debating table upon the polarizing issue. Ultimately this study found that life-long marijuana users use the drug as more of a medicinal purpose rather than as a recreational and are in fact are more responsible using the substance rather than users who may try it once or twice.

Cerda (2012) examined if there was a relationship connected between states that had passed medical marijuana laws and an increase in marijuana usage. The authors studied the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions from over 68,000 individuals ages 18 and over in order to get an accurate idea if a correlation between the new laws passed and marijuana usage existed. The study found that the correlation did in fact exist, and states that had passed marijuana laws experienced a higher amount of marijuana usage within its population. However, further research was needed to explore possible outside factors attributed to this increase of usage within the states that passed the marijuana laws. This article was important to the research because it offered the idea of, if marijuana was removed off the banned

substance list, would it result in an increase of marijuana usage? This study suggested that it would in fact.

Overall, each of these sources served to give the best range of positives and negatives effects involving marijuana upon the general public. The research consisted of equal voices being heard from both sides of the polarizing topic which is whether or not marijuana effects are overall positive or negative. These sources acted as an adequate research starting point into dwelling inside the concept of the effects and influences short-term and long-term usage of marijuana has on the mind and body.

Relationship between College Students and Marijuana –

For the second concept to expand upon, the relationship between marijuana and college students was chosen to give a better understanding of its prevalence on college campuses. More importantly the motivation behind why people chose to smoke marijuana was a big variable to further understand. Buckner (2013) was able to conduct the first investigative research into why and how marijuana usage is so prevalent among college students. Buckner (2013) was able to examine 223 college students through an online questionnaire which the students were then compensated with course credit. The article was able to conclude that “Relevant norms, expectancies, and motives accounted for 66.8% of the variance in cannabis use frequency and 28.7% of the variance in cannabis problems”. This research was crucial to my research topic because it offered light to the motivations behind people using marijuana.

Many people believe that marijuana usage begins in college, and more importantly begins freshman year through an initiation. Suerken (2014) explored this idea in her article that investigated predictors of lifetime marijuana usage at college level entries. The article studied

3,146 college students in North Carolina and Virginia area colleges through responses from 2 semesters worth of longitudinal studies. The results concluded that 30% of the tested had never used marijuana before entering college, and among that 30%, 8.5% first tried the drug freshmen year. The article also concluded that “having at least \$100 per month in spending money; attending church rarely or never; current use of cigarettes, alcohol, and hookah tobacco; lifetime use of other illicit drugs; and a higher propensity toward sensation seeking were associated with a higher likelihood of having used marijuana at least once at college entry” (Suerken, 2014). The article also stated that “Hispanic ethnicity, living on campus, and current use of cigarettes and alcohol were associated with a higher likelihood of initiating marijuana use during freshman year.” (Suerken, 2014). This source gave a better understanding to some of the factors and indicators that come with individuals trying marijuana for the first time in college.

Even though marijuana was the most frequently reported illicit drug used by college students (Lee, 2013), many believe that interventions are sometimes necessary for dealing with high-risk marijuana users that often deal with consequences related to the drug. Lee (2013) was able to conduct a study that evaluated the efficiency of motivational interventions that were created to decrease marijuana usage. Lee was able to study 212 college student participants from two different campuses who admitted to being high marijuana users (smoking at least 5 times in the past month). The method the researchers used were initial web based screenings and baseline assessments that determined whether the participant would have a one-on-one intervention or a group controlled intervention. A follow-up assessment was conducted approximately 3-6 months later that determined whether or not the experiment was a success. The authors of the article were able to conclude that “Results indicated significant intervention effects on number of joints smoked in a typical week and a trend toward fewer marijuana-related consequences compared

with the control group at 3-month follow-up” (Lee, 2014). This article is vital because it tried to solve the ever-growing “problem” of marijuana usage that has been increasing over the past several years.

It was important however, to not only question why marijuana users use the drug, but also when and where. To truly understand the mind of a heavy user, one must understand their patterns and experiences (positively or negatively) with the drug. Hammersley (2006) tried to answer these questions as well as of what other illicit drugs marijuana users use with the regarded substance. The authors sampled a set amount of individuals in the South Eastern Region of England with a structured set of questions that were conducted through an interviewing process. The results concluded that there were two types of users: causal and regular users. Stated from the article “The effects of use were similar to those described by Tart [Tart, C. T. (1970). Marijuana Intoxication: Common Experiences. *Nature*, 226, 701–704], being predominantly positive and about relaxation and sensuality, although negative effects on mood and cognition were also experienced. Users tended to mix cannabis, tobacco and alcohol more than mixing with other drugs.” The article concluded that the most dangerous aspect of using marijuana was the higher tendency to try tobacco products mixed with marijuana. In a sense, tobacco is regarded as a much more deadlier and dangerous drug than marijuana is by doctors and physicians. This source gave an idea of what current marijuana users thought and acted upon regarding when individuals used the drug.

The last source to be included upon the research consisted of trying to answer the motivational question as to why marijuana users use the drug. Wright (2012) explored the motivational context of marijuana users by using idiographic and nomothetic goal assessment approaches with 198 psychology college students. 43% of the students surveyed answered that

they used marijuana in the last 90 days. The authors were able to conclude off of the answers and data that “Students who reported high levels of meaning were less likely to have used marijuana in the past 90 days. For students who used marijuana, higher meaning ratings related to involvement in groups/organizations and fitness was correlated with decreased frequency of use. Moreover, ratings of efficiency related to self-generated goals were associated with less frequent use among smokers” (Wright, 2012). The results proved and showed that the pursuit of personal life goals was directly correlated with the frequency of using marijuana. In other words, marijuana has been proven to curb one’s own individual life goals and ambitions which they may have had before using marijuana extensively. That is not to say however, that participants just didn’t simply make new life goals after marijuana usage. This was crucial for the research because this source helped to answer the question whether or not marijuana directly impacted one’s motivation prior to using marijuana and after.

Each of these sources were beneficial to the understanding as to why people use marijuana as well as the motivations behind doing so. These gave me a better understanding as to some of the consequences that come from using the drug on a college level. The goal was to completely give an in-depth look inside the mind of a “marijuana user” and the effects (positively or negatively) it can have on the college individual and to the peers around him or her. Overall, marijuana continually grows more popular within college campuses every year. The main negative many college students view marijuana as to having is the legal trouble an individual faces if he or she is caught.

Relationship between Marijuana and College Athletes-

For the third literature review on the research topic, the relationship between college athletes and marijuana was explored and revealed insight upon the hot button topic. In the first article discovered, research was assessed to compare how much more or less marijuana was smoked between male college athletes and female college athletes to the rest of the college student body (Labrie, 2009). The authors were able to survey two National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) universities' male and female athletes. They surveyed the players in a live setting and were able to conclude that male athletes have a higher prevalence to smoke marijuana than female athletes do, and overall athletes in general will smoke more marijuana than the average college student. That being said, this research is critically important because it gave a better picture of the varied relationship that college athletes have with marijuana compared to what college students have. The primary reason as to why student athletes used marijuana was for an outlet to de-stress from the chaotic lives many student athletes faced while struggling to balance school work and practice time (Labrie, 2009).

Contrary to the previous research article, Page (2004) found that first year college students actually were more likely to smoke marijuana than college athletes were. The article examined marijuana smokers' belief that the prevalence of the college student body was smoking marijuana. The authors sampled an undisclosed amount of students at a northwestern public university about the issue and found that "Current use of marijuana was greater in non-athletes than athletes; however, lifetime use was equivalent" (Page, 2004). The authors of the article were also able to conclude that "Students who used marijuana held higher perceptions of the prevalence of marijuana use among their campus peers and those believing that marijuana use was normative on campus were more likely to be current marijuana users themselves." (Page,

2004). This source was valuable because it gave another degree of range to how athletes compared to the normal student body when it came to smoking marijuana. The article also revealed that current marijuana users are under the perception that the majority of their peers also use marijuana whereas that fact is indeed false.

Peer pressure is always a common argument made as to why an individual may try an illegal substance. The next article suggested that maybe the use of marijuana or alcohol by a college athlete was the result of the social standard that the team had created within the culture of the specific sport. The research examined if there was a direct relationship between one's loyalties to his or her team to the use of illegal substances that are allowed by the teams (Grossbard, 2009). The authors were able to conduct an online survey with dozens of collegiate athletes as well as gathered information from a live setting and concluded that the loyalty to one's team accounted for a significant variance in the likelihood that one would try marijuana. The authors were also able to state that "Stronger attraction to one's team may increase alcohol use but decrease marijuana use among male athletes, suggesting the importance of attraction to team when developing interventions for athletes" (Grossbard, 2009). This study gave a potential answer to why an athlete might be more inclined to try an illegal substance than not. This was extremely crucial because it answered one of the questions asked in the questionnaire to the sample demographic that was compared to the results from the survey.

For the next research source, former Louisiana State University (LSU) football player, Tyrann Mathieu was used as the focal point and as an example of a college player who was removed from the football team following several failed drug tests because of his high usage of marijuana (Evans, 2012). The article followed Mathieu's activities after the events that unfolded at LSU. The authors were able to tell the tale of a high profile athlete coming to terms with his

mistakes as he sought redemption by going to a rehabilitation center in hopes of making it to the NFL one day. This article was valuable because even though this was an example of a potential Heisman winner, Mathieu's downfall occurs all the time throughout all divisions of college sports. College players constantly fear that they may be kicked off the team or suspended a year for a failed drug test by the NCAA over marijuana.

Many concerns about why drugs on the banned substance list are deemed illegal by the NCAA were because of the side effects that positively enhanced sport performances by college athletes. The article explored the use of marijuana and how many French collegiate athletes used it on athletic and non-athletic levels of activities (Lorente, 2005). The authors conducted online questionnaires with various athletes from six Sport Science Universities in Southern France. The authors concluded that "Males were more prone to have already used cannabis to enhance non-sportive performance as well as sportive performance." Through the athletes' answers, the authors were also able to conclude that "...cannabis use to enhance sportive performance leads to cannabis use to enhance non-sportive performance and reciprocally. Moreover, the relaxing properties of cannabis may be frequently used to enhance performance" (Lorente, 2005). This source was crucial because it shed light upon how some individuals may use "recreational" drugs in a "non-recreational" activity. The purpose of this study is the reason why the NCAA still has it on its banned substance list, in case there are any potential positive enhancements marijuana may give to players during games. This conclusion alone can be used as reason enough for the NCAA to keep marijuana off the banned substance list, because it can potentially give an advantage to players who used it rather than players who don't.

Overall, each of these sources gave reinforcement to the research, exploring the complicated relationship between college athletes and marijuana. The various sources gave

enough range of perspectives that gave an accurate picture as to why a college athlete might be entailed or not to use marijuana. Without question, there is no easy answer to this complex relationship; however, the regarded resources gave the best background in an attempt to answer the research question.

Conceptual Framework-

Each of the concepts mentioned helped lay a foundation that built towards the next concept. For the first concept, knowing the positive and negative effects of marijuana helped give the reader a full understanding of the scientific facts before making any judgments pertaining to the taboos and stereotypes normally associated with marijuana. By allowing the reader to have a full range of facts about marijuana, the next concept between the relationship between college students and marijuana, supported the validations as to the possible motivations as to why college students may have tried the drug. This relationship was bound by curiosity, outside pressure, and the pleasurable traits that marijuana can have after usage. After knowing the relationship between college students and marijuana, readers can then explore how this same relationship exists between college athletes and the drug more specifically. Injuries, dependency, a means to de-stress, and pure boredom are all factors that contributed to the usage of marijuana by college athletes (Page, 2004).

Some terms that pertained to this study included “dependency” which in this study meant using marijuana on a daily basis to get through the day, “medicinal” which meant using the drug in an effort to recover from an injury or illness, “recreational” which meant using marijuana a couple times a week with friends in a social manner, and “side effects” which meant any negative or positive results individuals perceived after using the drug, were all crucial definitions

that needed to be accurately defined in order to eliminate any possible chance of confusion.

Some intervening variables that should be avoided are if some players fear repercussions because they gave an honest answer pertaining to their marijuana usage, or if a player is injured while answering the survey questions. The study is used to answer the questions of why, when, and how much do college student athletes tend to smoke marijuana and what their overall perceptions and stance are pertaining to the subject matter. Also, with the habitual marijuana smokers, the study was used to find out if there was any negative impact on an individual's group of friends around him due to smoking marijuana. Another aspect the study expanded upon was the concept of past experiences the individual athlete may have had with the drug. Overall, the variables that were measured for the survey included frequency of using marijuana between daily, weekly and monthly occurrences, what type of device does one use to smoke or intake the substance, when does that individual feel the need to use marijuana, and why they feel the need to use it, as well as whether or not that individual feels that marijuana should be removed from the NCAA banned substances list.

These concepts intertwined with each other, whether it was between college students and marijuana or college athletes and marijuana. Some relationships that pertained to the intertwining variables included whether or not players were hurt while answering the survey, whether an athlete used marijuana in a medicinal manner or recreational one, as well as the polarizing issue of the growing number of college athletes' continued usage of marijuana while the NCAA continued to keep it on the banned substances list.

Methods

The research question that was used was: What perceptions do college athletes have towards marijuana? A cross-sectional/survey design was used because a survey that consisted of dozens of questions pertaining to experiences with marijuana was the best and most effective way to retrieve the necessary information from the desired demographic. The survey was then emailed to each member of the desired sample. The results from the survey were then used as part of the overall conclusions based off of the research of the scholarly articles and references to make an accurate conclusion of what perceptions college student athletes actually have upon the characteristics of marijuana.

Desired Sample-

The population sampled was St. John Fisher College's Football team, Men's and Women's Basketball, Lacrosse, Golf, Cross Country and Track and Field teams as well as from the Women's Soccer Team. The desired population being sampled consisted of over 200 hundred males and females ranging from ages 18-23 and college educated. Each individual varied in both height and weight and were well informed that their answers would remain confidential. The majority of the sampled demographic was predominantly Caucasian but also consisted of several African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans. Each member on the final roster list of the teams was sent an email consisting of the questionnaire that was to be filled out.

Procedure-

Sampling-

The samples were accessed by looking up the names of players on the roster online. The next step was simply to send the questionnaire to each player through the St. John Fisher College

Gmail account. However, one limitation that was worth mentioning was the fact that only teams on campus at St. John Fisher College were sampled rather than various schools around the nation. This type of sampling would be considered convenient sampling because of how relatively close the desired demographic being sampled was located.

Data Collection-

Primary data was collected for the research because it involved the personal responses from current Division III athletes. The data was primary because the information came straight from the sources which were the athletes themselves. Quantitative data was collected for the research. My survey which regarded questions associated with the usage of marijuana involved the frequency of use by the individual as well as questions which pertained to why and when an individual used the substance. Such questions that dealt with the why and when marijuana was used was associated with multiple choice questions.

The process used to obtain the information consisted of emailing the survey to each individual player and evaluating the regarded responses and comparing them to the evidence found and discovered in the scholarly articles and journals. The types of answers that resulted from the questionnaire consisted of quantitative responses when regarding motivations behind marijuana usage and ordinal was regarding questions that pertained to the frequency of marijuana usage.

Dozens of questions were used to evaluate the perceptions college athletes have towards marijuana. Participants were asked in one example whether or not they believed marijuana should be legal in all 50 states. Another example of a question also included how many times

would an individual use marijuana on a monthly basis based off of the multiple choices of: none, 1-5, 6-10, 15-20, or 25+ (with the numbers representing the frequency of marijuana usage).

After data was collected, descriptive statistics were produced for all questions. A percentage was calculated for each question and answer to assess which responses were the most popular within the players. By measuring how many times each answer was chosen between the questions, an overall picture determined the perception college athletes have towards marijuana. The data collected was then ultimately measured to see if an extensive relationship between college athletes and marijuana usage existed and whether or not the perceptions are negative or positive towards the characteristics of marijuana.

Results

Description of Sample-

The data derived from the St. John Fisher College Football team, Men's and Women's Basketball, Lacrosse, Golf, Cross Country and Track and Field teams as well as from the Women's Soccer Team. Approximately, over 200 emails were sent out and the data derived from 60 responses that agreed to conduct the survey. However, each question varied to the amount of people who actually responded to each regarded question. One error that was present was a question that was added after 100 emails were sent out. The question asked whether the participant was male or female. This question was seen by the other 100 emails that were sent following the initial 100. Out of that 100, 22 responded showing that 55% were male and 45% female, a statistic that was believed to be accurate if it were sent to the original 100 participants.

However, it is believed that 60 responses and participants out of 200 did not accurately depict the demographic being surveyed.

Descriptive Statistics-

The first question asked “Do you currently smoke marijuana or have used it in the past?” 57 responded with 44 (77%) that answered “Yes” whereas 13 (23%) answered “No”. The next question then asked “If you clicked yes, please explain why you tried marijuana or continue to use it.” The data became inconsistent at this point because 39 responded to it whereas in the previous question 44 said that they had. 16 (44%) answered that they tried it either because they were curious or simply enjoyed it, 12 (33%) responded that friends were the major influence for usage, 6 (17%) answered that it helped them relax, 1 (2%) responded because they were drunk, and 1 (2%) answered because it helped remedy constant migraines. The third question asked “If you clicked no please explain why you decided never to try marijuana.” 14 total participants answered this question. 9 (64%) answered because they never felt like trying it or simply had no interest in it, 2 (14%) responded because the United States Government deemed it illegal, and 2 (14%) answered because it puts future career opportunities’ at risk if they failed a drug test. The fourth question asked “If you do use marijuana, what methods do you currently use to intake it?” 30 total responses were gathered from this question. 2 (7%) answered “Bongs”, 2 (7%) responded “Pipes or Bowls”, 5 (17%) answered “Joints or Blunts”, no one responded that they preferred “Edibles”, and 21 (70%) answered “All of the above”. The fifth question then asked “At what time during the day do/would you smoke marijuana?” There were a total of 33 participants who answered this question. 1 (3%) responded between “7:00am-12:00pm”, no one responded between “12:00pm-4:00pm”, 6 (18%) answered between “4:00pm- 9:00pm”, and 26 (79%) responded between “9:00pm-2:00am”. The sixth question then asked “On average, how

many times a month do you smoke marijuana?" 31 total participants responded to this question. 10 (32%) answered between "1-3" times, 1 (3%) responded between "4-10" times, 10 (32%) answered between "11-20" times, and 10 (32%) responded to "over 21" times per month. The seventh question asked the participants "Do you believe marijuana should be fully legalized in all 50 states?" There were 51 total response to this question with 39 (76%) that answered "Yes" and 12 (24%) that answered "No".

The rest of the questions then pertained to the individual athlete and teams and how marijuana impacted him or herself playing sports. The eighth question asked "Are you currently injured or sore from athletics?" 51 total participants answered with 27 (53%) that responded with "Yes" and 24 (47%) that answered "No". The previous question is then related to the ninth question that asked "In your past experiences, do you believe that marijuana has directly helped you recover from injuries or soreness?" A total of 48 participants answered with 14 (29%) that responded with "Yes" and 34 (71%) that responded with "No". The tenth question asked "What do you believe is the percentage of players on your team who smoke marijuana on a regular basis is?" A total of 50 participants responded with 9 (18%) that answered between "10% or under", 20 (40%) that responded between "25%-50%", 20 (40%) that answered between "50%-75%" and 1 (2%) that responded between "75% or above". The eleventh question then asked "What do you believe is the percentage of players on your team who have at least tried marijuana once in their life is?" A total of 50 participants responded with 0 that answered "10% or below", 6 (12%) that responded between "25%-50%", 11 (22%) that answered between "50%-75%", and 33 (66%) that responded with "75% or above". The twelfth question was then added late for the last 100 emails that were sent out that asked "Are you male or female?" A total of 22 responses were gathered with 12 (55%) that answered "Male" and 10 "45%" that answered "Female". The

thirteenth question asked “Do you believe that you would use more or would be more inclined to use marijuana after your regarded sport season was over?” 37 total participants answered with 20 (54%) that responded “Yes” and 17 (46%) that answered “No”. And lastly the final fourteenth question asked the participants “Should marijuana continue to remain on the banned substance list by the NCAA?” 37 total participants answered with 18 (49%) that responded with “Yes” and 19 (51%) that answered “No”.

Conclusion

Overall the question that was designed to be answered was what the perceptions were from college student athletes towards marijuana? Percentages of how the participants responded were calculated for each question and told a significant amount about the tendency and frequent usages from the college athletes towards the polarized issue of marijuana. Perceptions that were able to be evaluated included: the amount of surveyed college athletes who smoke marijuana, why they tried it and continue to use, frequency of usage, stance on whether or not marijuana helps recover from injury, how many teammates the regarded participant believed still use marijuana, and whether or not the regarded participant believed marijuana should be removed from the banned substance list set out by the NCAA.

Discussion-

The research and survey that was done as a result of the designed research question expanded the body of knowledge scholars now have on drug usage prevalent among college athletes by emphasizing on the importance of the point of view from the student athlete’s standpoint being understood. The NCAA should have complete knowledge and understanding of

the demographic they govern and drug test if they are to be fair and claim they have the best interest of the student athletes that they command. The first essential factor that was designed to be answered was what effects marijuana actually had on the student athletes. It was found that a majority of the participants didn't believe marijuana actually helped recover from injury or soreness, however, the dominant reasons why marijuana was used was because of curiosity, many of the participant's friends already used it, and marijuana helped relax the participant. The only consensus negative that was found from the survey was that smoking marijuana increased the risk of a failed drug test by future possible employment. Cerda (2012) examined if there was a relationship connected between states that had passed medical marijuana laws and an increase in marijuana usage. Based off this, New York State have minimal medical marijuana laws that are passed that allow medical marijuana to be used by patients with severe diseases or who are in extreme critical conditions. However, no laws have yet to be passed that would indicate or promote recreational usage in New York State. However, the survey results showed that 77% of the surveyed participants have either tried marijuana in the past or continue to use it. Also, 76% of the participants believed that marijuana should be fully legalized in all 50 states. This statistic showed that regardless of whether or not recreational marijuana laws are passed in a state, the majority of college student athletes currently use or have used marijuana and believe it should be fully legalized.

The second factor that was essential for understanding was understanding the relationship between marijuana and college students who don't play sports, and whether or not that relationship was different from that of those you do play sports. Gathered from the survey, it was determined that student athletes were in fact more inclined to use marijuana more often after the season was over with 55% of the participants stating they would. Hammersley (2006) also stated

that there were two categories of marijuana users: casual and regular users. The results determined that 80% of the participants believed that 25%-75% of their fellow teammates use marijuana on a regular basis whereas 88% believed that between 50% and 100% have tried marijuana at least once in their teammates' lives. The data suggested that the participants agreed that the number of teammates who smoked marijuana on a regular basis is high, and the number of teammates who have at least tried it once in their lives were even higher. Since the data suggested that one would be more inclined to use marijuana after their regarded season ended, it is assumed that college students at St. John Fisher College would be more susceptible to smoke marijuana than college athletes.

The third factor that was important to comprehend was the relationship between marijuana and college athletes. The primary reason as to why student athletes used marijuana was for an outlet to de-stress from the chaotic lives many student athletes faced while struggling to balance school work and practice time (Labrie, 2009). Labrie's stance showed similar reasons as to why many of the participants responded to why they used marijuana. 17% of the participants agreed that they used marijuana to de-stress and relax. Another reason as to why the participants used marijuana was because their own regarded friends had used it prior. The research conducted by Grossbard examined if there was a direct relationship between one's loyalties to his or her team to the use of illegal substances that are allowed by the teams (Grossbard, 2009). The data to the survey suggested that the influence of friends did in fact have an influence as to why one might try marijuana with 33% of the participants saying peer pressure from friends was the reason why. However, the dominant reason as to why college athletes use marijuana was because of curiosity and wanting to try the illicit drug only because one wanted to. 44% of the participants agreed that the reason why they tried marijuana was because they themselves wanted

to and believed it was not bad for them. High users of marijuana were considered if one used it roughly 5 times per month. If this was the standard, than 67% of the student athletes at St. John Fisher College would be considered as high marijuana users. The conclusion based off this research showed that a direct relationship between marijuana and college athletes does exist, and the majority dominantly believed the positive effects of marijuana outweighed the negatives.

Limitations and Delimitations-

The main limitation to this study was the fear of repercussions from coaches or administrations if the questions were answered honestly. The survey asked very personal questions that would likely result in consequences from coaches or the administration if they were disclosed the results. Also, getting roughly 60 participants from approximately 200 emailed players was a limitation that is believed to be not enough responses to truly get an accurate voice of the perceptions college athletes do in fact have on the characteristics of marijuana.

The intentional choices that were made to limit the study were limiting the email list to 200 participants. By emailing the Football team, Men's and Women's Basketball, Lacrosse, Golf, Cross Country and Track and Field teams as well as from the Women's Soccer Team it was believed that this would be a sufficient amount of participants needed for an accurate voice to represent the college athletes of St. John Fisher College. Factors to consider for future research on this topic would be to strive for the largest number of desired participants for the designed survey in order to receive the most accurate picture of what the college student athletes actually believed in when regarding marijuana.

Final Summary-

In conclusion, the study showed how a vast majority of college student athletes at 77% currently or have used marijuana in the past, because dominantly either they just felt like trying the illicit substance or friends influenced them to use it. For the student athletes who responded to not using marijuana, their main reason was because they just had no interest in trying it. The results all suggested that student athletes heavily favored using marijuana at night between 9:00 pm- 2:00 am. The frequency of usage per month was virtually balanced, however a vast majority heavily believed that marijuana should be legal in all 50 states. The majority of participants believed that marijuana virtually had no impact in helping the regarded student athlete recover from soreness or injury. The most interesting finding of the data suggested that 80% of the participants believed that 25%-75% of their fellow teammates use marijuana on a regular basis whereas 88% believed that between 50% - 100% have tried marijuana at least once in their teammates' lives. A slim majority of the participants at 54% would be more inclined to smoke marijuana after the season was over due to fear of a failed drug test by the NCAA, however, only 51% of the participants believed that marijuana should be removed from the banned substance list.

Overall, it seemed that the majority of college athletes do in fact use marijuana frequently and believe it has no significant effect on one's performance on and off the playing field. The majority of college athletes believed that marijuana should be legal in all 50 states and removed off the banned substance list of the NCAA. After conclusion of the study, a direct relationship between marijuana and college student athletes does exist, and the dominant view was that marijuana's positive effects outweighed its negatives.

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Appendices

Consent Letter-

Purpose and Description: The purpose of this research is to understand the perceptions of the characteristics of marijuana from the college student's standpoint. As a participant in this survey, you are being asked to complete a survey that addresses the topic of marijuana and your use of the substance. For example, you will be asked what you believe the purpose is of using marijuana as well as how frequent you may use it. This survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

The information you provide may help expand the knowledge NCAA officials and school administrators have towards the motivation behind student athletes who use marijuana. Risks associated with participating in this survey are that your teammates or coaches could be aware of your participation through observation of you taking the survey or conversations within your team and teammates. However, participants to this survey will be kept confidential and results will be presented as a collection of responses to only my advisor and myself. Names and contact information will not be included in the presentation of the results.

There will be no benefits or incentives towards completing this survey. Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participating you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled (your coaches or any figure in an authoritative state over you will not have access to the answers to this survey). Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions please complete the survey if you would like to participate in this research. By completing the questionnaire, you give permission

to let your answers be used for an academic study. You may print this consent letter for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact my advisor at (585) 385-7389.

Do you agree to participate?

Sample Email-

Hey everyone,

For my senior thesis I have chosen to conduct research on the perceptions college athletes have on the characteristics of marijuana and their experiences with it. I would greatly appreciate your participation in the survey, and it should take no more than 10 minutes maximum. Of course, all answers will be kept confidential and will be strictly used to view what the opinions are from college athletes on marijuana. Thank you very much everyone. You can access the survey through the link below:

https://sjfc.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cOwnsTNqotNrUEt

Sincerely,

Mike Magnarelli

Survey Questions-

1. Do you currently smoke marijuana or have used it in the past?
2. If you clicked yes, please explain why you tried marijuana or continue to use it.
3. If you clicked no please explain why you decided never to try marijuana.
4. Are you male or female?
5. If you do use marijuana, what methods do you currently use to intake it?

6. At what time during the day do/would you smoke marijuana?
7. On average, how many times a month do you smoke marijuana?
8. Do you believe marijuana should be fully legalized in all 50 states?
9. Are you currently injured or sore from athletics?
10. In your past experiences, do you believe that marijuana has directly helped you recover from injuries or soreness?
11. What do you believe is the percentage of players on your team who smoke marijuana on a regular basis is?
12. What do you believe is the percentage of players on your team who have at least tried marijuana once in their life is?
13. Do you believe that you would use more or would be more inclined to use marijuana after your regarded sport season was over?
14. Should marijuana continue to remain on the banned substance list by the NCAA?