

THE EDGE

PLEASANT GROVE HIGH SCHOOL
5406 MCKNIGHT ROAD | TEXARKANA, TX 75503
VOL. 32 #4 | FEBRUARY 11, 2016

“

I’ve eaten so much sugar everyday for so long, that at this point I think I’d just be an empty shell without it.” - Kaitlyn Jones (10)

54%

of students drink a sweetened beverage 1-2 times a day

Getting Gas

If you’re worried about filling up your car because of the price of gas, you don’t have to worry anymore. Six months ago, gas prices were on average around \$2.76 a gallon. Now, gas averages \$1.65 a gallon, and it’s still going down. In Houston, gas is as low as \$1.23 a gallon, and it’s continuing to drop. With the consistent drop in the price of crude oil, refineries have increased their gas production, which makes it less expensive.

Just Ask Us

It’s 70 degrees in Texarkana — on Jan. 31. Representatives from nations from around the world met at the United Nations Climate Change Conference recently to talk about what nations are doing to limit the emission of greenhouse gasses. These representatives drafted an agreement that would require nations to drastically reduce their level of greenhouse gasses by the end of this century.

In your opinion, does climate change/global warming exist?

* 90 surveyed

72% SAID Yes

“It’s like 70 degrees outside and it’s supposed to be winter right now.”

-Emily Gatlin (11)

28% SAID No

“Global warming and climate change don’t exist. They’re just hoaxes created by the government.”

-Kevin Nia (10)

Next Big Thing



Instead of waking up early just to sit through traffic, you may be able to avoid traffic entirely. At CES (Consumer Electronics Show) 2016, Ehang, a Chinese drone company, unveiled the newest addition to its line of drones. The Ehang-184 is a fully automated transport drone, and the passenger will only have to press “takeoff” and “land” buttons. Ehang says the drone will be much safer than driving, since drivers are the main cause of accidents. With no price point yet and the government requirements the drone has to meet before it can be sold to the public, we may not see the drone for many years to come. For now we’ll just have to keep sitting through traffic.

Anything for the

You can’t focus.
You haven’t studied.
You’re stressed out.
And now you
have a test.
What would you do if
you were desperate
for a grade?

BEN NORTHAM
[editor]

She just needed three more points.

Just three points to get her ACT score high enough to get accepted to Texas A&M, but this was her third try, and the stress was making it impossible for her to focus. So on test day she complained to a friend who offered a quick fix.

“He said, ‘why don’t you just take one of my Adderall?’ so I did,” she said. “I was scared but it made me extremely focused. I usually get distracted during the test but this time I was really tuned in.”

Ashley (not her real name) used a common drug, something that students diagnosed with a hyperactivity disorder take to help them cope with distractions in their daily lives. However, Ashley doesn’t have ADD or ADHD.

She did something that college and high school students are doing frequently to help them deal with the pressures of school.

What started out as a way to help people with ADD or ADHD reach a “normal” level of cognitive ability, has turned into a business, and “study drugs” like Adderall and Vyvanse are spreading from colleges into high schools. In an environment where the work seems endless and when you finish there is always twice as much to do, some students are willing to resort to anything to compete.

“I’ve had ADD for all of my life, but I never wanted to take medicine for it,” said Josh, a college student at the University of Texas. “One day I was so overwhelmed by homework that I decided to take some. After I took it, I did all of my homework and studied for all of my tests — for the whole week.”

Adderall, Vyvanse, Rubifen, Ritalin, and Dexedrine all have different names, but do the same

thing. These are all drugs used to help raise the number of neurotransmitters in the brain. Study drugs, as they are commonly labeled, are prescription stimulants used by people with and without a prescription to increase focus.

“You have to make the distinction between drugs and prescription medicine,” said Dr. Bryan Smith, a psychologist practicing in Texarkana. “Stimulant medicine is similar to what people call ‘speed’ on the street. If it’s used in the right amount, it can be helpful to some people, but if it’s used in large amounts or even in small amounts by people who don’t have a prescription, it can be very dangerous.”

Study drugs can be used to make tasks that seem to take superhuman focus easy. If you have ADD or ADHD, these drugs correct the problem, but if these drugs are taken by someone without these diseases, the result can be unpredictable.

“I took it one time to try and focus and it didn’t go well,” said Bethany, a senior (not her real name). “I felt really sick to my stomach, threw up, and didn’t eat anything at all. I probably won’t take it again.”

An ADD or ADHD diagnosis requires a visit to a psychiatrist and usually a test. However, some doctors aren’t sure if this is the best way to diagnose these diseases.

“I don’t think the traditional method of filling out a form of symptoms is an effective way of diagnosing people with ADD or ADHD,” said Dr. Smith. “When you take a neurological exam that looks at the disfunction of the frontal lobe or other parts of the brain, it’s a much more thorough and exact way for people to be diagnosed.”

On college campuses, the use of study drugs has become a problem. According to a study conducted by Alan DeSantis, a professor at the University of Kentucky, 34% of college students have used Adderall and about 90% of those students use it to study.

“Some kids do it to cope, some do it to get high, and some do it to try to compete in their school,” said Dr. Smith. “There are a host of different reasons that students take it, so there’s no specific reason.”

Adderall can be habit forming, and is classified as a schedule II drug by the United States, which means that it has the highest abuse potential of a drug that has a medical utility. To put that into perspective, Morphine and Opium are just below, classified as a schedule III drug, while marijuana and heroin are just above, classified as a schedule I drug.

“The fact that study drugs are only one level below the drugs that we hear horror stories about is crazy to me,” junior Jedd Ramos said. “People take drugs that have no benefit, so if a drug does have a benefit, people are more likely to take it, even if it’s dangerous.”

If students without a prescription are caught using Adderall or other study drugs, there are serious consequences.

“For random drug tests, the first time you test positive you get a warning,” said Vice Principal Kelly Kinney. “If you are caught on campus with the drugs in a high enough volume, and you don’t have a prescription, you could be disciplined for being in possession of a controlled substance.”

If you have trouble focusing and you take Adderall, that’s just a temporary fix. There are other issues that require work.

“What I often hear in medicine is ‘He was diagnosed with ADD, we gave him a pill, and it fixed it,’” said Dr. Smith. “If someone told you that you had diabetes and that if you to take a pill and your blood sugar will be fine, they’ve only treated a part of it. You have to adjust your diet and your way of life. The same goes for ADD. Just taking a pill that increases focus and impulse control ignores the other half of what’s going on that a pill isn’t going to fix.”

Despite being highly discouraged by doctors and university officials, the use of Adderall has risen over the past two years among students who don’t have a prescription.

“If you didn’t have a prescription and you needed to get Adderall, it’s almost as easy as going to the bank and withdrawing money from your account,” Josh said. “Everyone knows someone who has bought or sold it. That’s just part of the college life.”

Study Up

When ADHD drugs are used for non prescribed reasons, they are sometimes referred to as “study drugs.” We put students to the test to get their views on the subject

*100 students surveyed

Would you consider taking a study drug?



Yes

No

Have you ever been offered a study drug?



Yes

No

Do you think study drugs are dangerous?



Yes

No

Why would students take a study drug?



Big Test



Other



Games