

# Example of opioids essay

[Countries](#), [England](#)



This chapter provides substantial information about opium and opioids. The chapter delves into a number of issues regarding opium. These include its extraction, historical issues, its role in the wars between China and Great Britain, its active components, how the typical opioid user has changed over the years, how the supply of heroin has changed over the years, and laws that have been put in place to address the abuse of opium. Interestingly opium, a juice from the *Papaver Somniferum* plant has had a history of medical use of about 600 years long. Some of the medical science problems that opium solved include relieving pain and suffering, and reducing diarrhea. In addition to this medical use, opium was also used to deliver pleasure and relief from anxiety. This means that opium has also been used for recreational purposes, and many of its users did experience dependence. Its history is traced about several millennia ago in a Middle Eastern country and is described as a substance from a plant that when eaten eased suffering and pain. It is important to note that opium has been important for medical science, ranging from Egyptian to Greek medicine. Opioid dependence can be traced back to 1000 AD when Biruni composed a pharmacology book. However, despite its medicinal use, some such as Thomas DeQuincy observed that opium use could lead to dependence and as such withdrawal symptoms. This chapter also highlights another interesting aspect in that opium was a lucrative commodity to trade. However, when it was banned in China, smuggling of illegal opium became very profitable. It was opium that could lead to a war between Great Britain and China and the subsequent acquisition of Hong Kong island by the British after their victory. Opium has three active agents. They are morphine, codeine and heroin.

Morphine is a primary active agent, codeine is the secondary active agent and heroin is a diacetylmorphine which is a potent derivative of morphine. Therefore, heroine is about 3 times as potent as morphine. It was in the 19th century that options of oral administration or injection evolved, with the latter being more effective. In the start of the 20th century, a high percentage of Americans were dependent on one of the opioids. The growth of patent medicines led to an increase in use of opioids since they were easily available and worked in relieving aches, pains and anxieties. However, it is dependence that led to the adoption of two laws namely the Pure Foods and Drugs Act in 1906 and the Harrison Act in 1914. With these acts limiting avenues for legal opium, illegal dealers capitalized on this and since the price of heroin was high, users had to turn to criminal activities such as burglary to finance their dependence.

A key thing to learn is that though opium was instrumental for medicinal use in relieving pain and suffering, too much use usually leads to dependence. However, after the use of opium was banned, illicit opioid users were viewed as criminals and degenerates. This is not the right kind of attitude to portray towards people who have a habit. People who are drug-dependent need sympathy and medical assistance. Rather than becoming less tolerant of them, society needs to help such people abandon their habits by ensuring that they get the right treatments instead of throwing them in jail or isolating them. It is important to not view drug users as criminals, but rather as individuals who are in need of our compassion, help and medical assistance. It is through this way that they can recover from their dependence on substances.