Rehab Studies Differences Between Opium and Heroin

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Wytheville, VA ? ReVIDA® Recovery is a local rehab that publishes blogs educating about substance use. Their latest installment studies the differences between opium and heroin. As a leading provider of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) in the Appalachian area, they have helped many to reclaim their lives from opioid use disorder.

?Opium is a non-synthetic opioid, also known as an opiate. It is derived from chemical compounds that are extracted from the poppy plant. Opium has been around since early B.C. times, originating in what is now called Southwest Asia. After feeling the effects it created, opium was passed around throughout Egypt where it became an in-demand product. Throughout the next centuries, opium would be developed for medicinal uses, but the rate of illicit use began to cause more harm than good. Opium itself is not as potent as other derivatives, but it is the basis for all opiate and opioid products.

Opium comes from the seedpods of the poppy plant. Small incisions are made in the pod where a milk-like fluid is collected. This is then dried and becomes opium resin. Once the resin is mostly dry, it is stored in bags or rolled into packaged balls and is ready for sale,? the blog states.

Heroin is a semi-synthetic opioid and can be classified as an opioid or opiate depending on the refinement.

As an opioid, it is derived from the poppy plant where the liquid inside the plant seedpods is collected to create heroin and other opioids. The more chemical processes the liquid goes through, the more potency increases. Morphine and codeine are some of the substances produced, but heroin is the most potent. Heroin was a popular trade product alongside opium as they were easy to transport and had a long shelf life. Heroin is produced using the Southwest Asian method and gets transported through Asia to Europe.

Both opium and heroin work by attaching to opioid receptors in the brain. No matter how each substance is ingested, they cause the same effects within the brain and body. Common short-term effects of opium and heroin include a rush of euphoria, relaxation, drowsiness, and dizziness. If use continues, constipation, dry mouth, and bouts of nodding in and out of consciousness will occur. While short-term use does not necessarily mean the person has an opioid use disorder, it can spark the development of one.

?As the use of opium and/or heroin continues, the brain and body will begin to experience long-term damage. Opium and its derivatives have been understudied when it comes to heart health. However, in recent years, studies have shown the negative effects that opium and heroin have on the cardiovascular system. When opium or heroin are taken long-term, sex hormones, physical activity, and the ability to sense cardiac pain all decrease. At the same time, this causes insulin resistance, inflammation, and proteins that transport ?bad? cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein or LDL) to increase. This increases the chances of experiencing a cardiac event as well as developing coronary artery disease,? the blog continues.

Although in the same class of substance, there are differences between opium and heroin. Opium has been used as an anti-diarrheal, anesthetic, and cough suppressant in early times. However, opium was around before any government regulations and is not technically approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Its derivatives including morphine and codeine are regulated and serve medicinal purposes today, most often prescribed to treat severe pain. Heroin has no medicinal purpose and is an illegal substance. Although it is derived from opium, heroin undergoes extensive chemical processes that contribute to its high potency. Morphine is 10 times more potent than opium, and heroin can be up to 50 times more potent than morphine.

There is no guarantee that someone who takes a derivative of opium will become dependent on the substance. However, some factors can influence the likelihood of developing an opioid use disorder. These include having parents or siblings who use opioids, growing up in a stressful environment including poverty, constant moves, domestic violence, and abuse, being genetically predisposed to reckless behavior, and having a mental health condition such as depression or anxiety.

ReVIDA® Recovery is dedicated to treating opioid use disorder throughout Tennessee and Virginia. Their program consists of MAT and outpatient therapy as well as connecting patients to resources. They take Medicaid and commercial insurance and offer same-day appointments to get those looking for help treatment right away.

To learn more about ReVIDA® Recovery, call 423-631-0432 or visit their website.

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Crossroads Treatment Center of Wytheville, VA

Our supportive and passionate staff is ready to help regardless of your past treatment experiences and at whatever stage of your journey you are in.

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