

Unintended Consequences: Why Painkiller Addicts Turn to Heroin (10.3)

For Discussion

Vocab

1. **Define:** opiate, unwittingly, receptor, synthetic, drug tolerance, deterrent, reformulated, solubilized, intrinsic, rheumatological, malingerer
2. How can describing the effects of pill or heroin addiction as an “evil” rather than a “problem” influence the way the author and others think about these effects?
3. “Medication or drugs aren't the problem; it's the intrinsic behavior of human beings.” What is the difference?
4. “Make no mistake, the crackdown on opiates was a good thing, but there have been unintended consequences.”
 - a. If there were unintended consequences, why does Gupta conclude that the crackdown was a “good thing”? Explain
 - b. Does the rest of the article support that claim? Explain.
5. Gupta focuses on the danger that addicts turn to heroin as a substitute for other opiates. What about non-addicts? If prescription pain pills are more difficult to get, where will people turn for pain relief?
6. Why might heroin be cheaper than legal pain pills?
 - a. What are some costs that makers of legal pain pills bear that makers and dealers of heroin do not?
 - b. What are some costs heroin dealers bear that pain pill manufacturers do not?
7. Which is worse, living with pain or risking addiction to pain pills? Who should make that decision?