



Morphine for Babies

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Morphine is a powerful pain-relieving drug. I use it on a daily basis in the ER where I work to relieve the severe pain of an acute heart attack or a ruptured appendix and many other conditions that cause severe pain. Morphine is a molecule that is found in opium, which is the dried sap from the seedpods of opium poppies. It was first isolated in 1804 but became much more widely used after the invention of the hypodermic needle in 1857. Morphine as well as laudanum (a tincture of opium containing morphine and codeine) were widely available during the American Civil War and used extensively to treat the pain of the wounded. Today it is still the best pain relieving medication we have.

Before the physical pains brought on our race by sin God had provided a remedy for us encoded in the DNA of a beautiful flower. But the story is more complex than that. The reason morphine works is that there are morphine receptors in the human nervous system. These are complex protein molecules embedded in the cell membranes of various neurons throughout certain regions of the brain as well as in some other tissues. These receptors are like little switches to turn on or off certain functions inside of the cell. The code to manufacture these receptors is part of our human DNA. When a morphine molecule comes in contact with one of these receptors it snaps into a socket that fits it perfectly and the switch is flipped and the cell responds.

The pain pathways in the brain have morphine receptors on them and when morphine flips those switches it turns off the pain signal so it is not transmitted on to the next neuron in the pathway. Thus the feeling of pain stops.

So someone asks if there is a receptor for morphine in the human brain – does the human brain also make its own morphine? And the answer is yes, and as they started to study it - not only does the brain make morphine but also many other morphine like molecules called endorphins that can also fit into the morphine sockets and flip the morphine switches. We have now identified about 50 of these morphine like endorphins in the human brain but we don't know why there are so many different types – the brain is exceedingly complex. There is apparently a whole system of actions mediated by these molecules. We know that feelings of joy and euphoria and well-being are mediated by endorphins as well as the release of sex hormones and the regulation of blood pressure. The immune system is greatly enhanced by the action of endorphins. And there are undoubtedly many other actions we have not yet identified.

Some of the addicting properties of endorphins have to do with the fact that we were designed to repeat actions that make us feel good – these endorphins are released by many actions that were meant to be good for us. Listening to beautiful music, being in love, the applause of the crowd, a delicious meal, sex, looking at a beautiful scene, physical exercise, friendship, compassion, and many more are all sensations that cause the release of endorphins. It is all part of the molecular machinery in the brain – doing what is good for us was meant to feel good – in a complex and delicious way that was meant to bring joy and meaning to life. And throughout eternity the redeemed will ever enjoy the increasing and subtle nuances of this molecular gift from our Creator that sets at the very center of the enjoyment of our existence.

Abuse

But sin has corrupted this gift and thousands have found the abuse of this gift to be a curse. Opiate addiction in its many forms has ruined countless lives. Morphine, heroin, codeine, Vicodin, Percocet, Dilaudid, Demerol and many more natural and synthetic morphine like drugs are available today. When taken into the body they flood the system and flip all the morphine switches. Often there is an initial powerful euphoric feeling that is very satisfying and also a tremendous relief of tension. Pain is gone and then follows a soft, warm, drowsy, cozy state that can last for several hours. There is a pleasant state of mild dizziness that is not as impairing as the effects of alcohol. And there is also a sense of apathy or distancing from whatever is going on around oneself. The moral or decision center

of the brain seems to be sedated fostering a disinhibited state where it is much easier to say or do things that in your right mind you would not do.

Overdose

In an accidental or intentional overdose the brain becomes very sedated and slips into a coma – the breathing slows down and then stops. At this point death soon occurs from respiratory arrest unless someone gets them to an ER in time where I can give them a shot of Narcan – a powerful antidote which immediately displaces all of the morphine from every receptor producing an immediate reversal and a very sudden, painful and unpleasant awakening. We usually place their arms and legs in leather restraints before giving this shot to prevent injury to the ER staff from the often violent outburst that can occur.

Opiate addiction

But it is addiction to these powerful drugs that has become the real curse for so many. Repeated doses taken regularly so as to feel again all the good feelings associated with this drug are not without their effect on the nervous system. This regular use results in a dependency where the brain adapts to the over stimulation of all of its morphine receptors by gradually reducing the number of receptors on the cells. The higher the dose and the longer it is continued the fewer and fewer receptors are left in the brain. And so higher and higher doses must be taken for the same effect. Now there is little if any euphoria - but the drug must be continued in order to prevent a very painful and dysphoric withdrawal state associated with abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and fever. All this is associated with intense anxiety and a powerful craving for more of the drug. In this state of mind, one will do almost anything to get another dose just to relieve the withdrawal symptoms. Every day many of these anxious miserable individuals present to the ER seeking relief from these intense pains and awful feelings.

Morphine for babies

Last year a young woman in South Carolina was arrested and charged with the murder of her 6-month-old baby. She was illegally taking large amounts of these pain pills while still breast-feeding her baby who apparently stopped breathing due to the large amount of morphine found in its blood.

But did you know that God designed a mother's breast milk to naturally have morphine in it? A human baby is very immature at birth and must undergo a tremendous amount of development during the first year of life and so will need to be very dependent on a regular supply of milk from the mother and so the morphine in just the right amount provides a dependency that keeps the baby regularly in demand of its next dose of the perfect nutrition it needs. And the pleasant positive cozy restful state associated with it also helps to create a bond where the baby identifies its mother as the source of everything positive in life. After weaning, as the child matures, he can learn the value of other positive activities in life that will naturally release his own internal endorphins. And the special bond with his mother that started with the morphine in his milk will only deepen as he learns to love and appreciate her more fully as his knowledge and comprehension of her love for him grows. And as she points him to his Creator in time, his love and appreciation for his Saviour will become the greatest source of joy and endorphin release in his life.

"It ever has appeared to me to be cold, heartless business for mothers who can nurse their children to turn them from the maternal breast to the bottle." CD 227

Casomorphins

For some of the same reasons that human milk has morphine in it so cow's milk has morphine like substances in it. They are small peptide molecules called Casomorphins – because they are released from the digestion of the casein in the cow's milk. They bind to morphine receptors in the brain just like morphine does. Humans were never designed to drink cow's milk – but when we do, we can form the same addictive dependency to it as a baby does to its mother's milk. And so we live in a nation that is fully addicted to cheese and ice cream (which have much higher levels of Casomorphins than milk). The problem is that these high doses of animal fat and cholesterol along with high doses of

animal hormones combine to create the perfect storm of obesity, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, cancer and many other diseases in this nation.

God speaking through His prophet said: "Cheese should never be introduced into the stomach....it is wholly unfit for food." CD 368

A mother's milk was made for her baby and cow's milk was made for baby cows. When we pervert the natural order that God created and take in large amounts of dairy products into the human body – we must expect that serious diseases will be the natural consequences of this disregard of His counsel.

If you have become addicted to Casomorphins and can't live without cheese and ice cream, I would urge you by the grace of God to break with this addiction and to come as close as you can to God's natural diet that you may enjoy the natural endorphins he has designed for your brain.