Morphin
Kate Lenart, MS

From the History and Archives Collection

Although our understanding of opioid addiction has expanded considerably over the past decades, archival evidence indicates historical awareness of the habit-forming capabilities of opioid-derived drugs. The fourth edition of Gould’s 30000 Medical Words Pronounced and Defined (1907, see Figure 1) recognizes the dangers of “morphin,” defining the terms “morphinomania,” as “a morbid desire for morphin,” and “morphinism” as “the morbid state produced by the excessive use of morphin.” A similar acknowledgment appears in an emergency drug kit manufactured by Wyeth during the mid-20th century. The emergency vials containing morphine and meperidine both bear labels cautioning, “Warning - May be Habit-Forming” (see figure 2).

Figure 1. 30000 Medical Words Pronounced and Defined, 1907
A POCKET MEDICAL DICTIONARY
GIVING THE PRONUNCIATION AND DEFINITION OF THE PRINCIPAL WORDS USED IN MEDICINE AND THE COLLATERAL SCIENCES
INCLUDING
VERY COMPLETE TABLES OF CLINICAL EPONYMIC TERMS, OF THE ARTERIES, MUSCLES, NERVES, BACTERIA, BACILLI, MICRO-COCCI, SPIRILLA, AND THERMOMETRIC SCALES, AND A NEW DOSE-LIST OF DRUGS AND THEIR PREPARATIONS, IN BOTH THE ENGLISH AND METRIC SYSTEMS OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES, BASED UPON THE NEW (1900) U. S. PHARMACOPOEIA

BY
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Fourth Edition
REVISED AND ENLARGED
80,000 WORDS

PHILADELPHIA
P. BLAKISTON'S SON & CO.
1012 WALNUT STREET
1907

Figure 2. Emergency Vials