

The politics of pain - BMJ

Tatum Anderson

A story published in the August 11 issue of the BMJ (Volume 341) investigates the reasons behind the severe restrictions on the use of morphine for pain relief in most of the world. Author Tatum Anderson explores the history of international treaties, stigma, and fear that have created a low demand.

In spite of language contained in international drug conventions, such as the United Nations 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, which allows countries to use drugs such as morphine for medical and scientific purposes, many nations do not. Based on interviews with PPSG staff, International Pain Policy Fellow Gabriel Madiye from Sierra Leone, and several other international experts, the author highlights the prevalent misconceptions about opioid analgesics, the ongoing lack of education and training in modern pain management, and widespread restrictive national drug control policies that contribute to the troubling cycle of low demand for and restricted supply of strong pain medications.

A link to the article is available at

http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/341/aug11_2/c3800. Please note that a subscription or payment to the BMJ website is required to read the article in full.

For more information on the PPSG's International Pain Policy Fellowship, visit

<http://www.painpolicy.wisc.edu/internat/IPPF/index.htm>.