Lesley Ojilere

Kylee C. Pastore

ENGL 11000

14 March 2022

Source-Based Essay Final Draft

Despite the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, another health crisis remains, albeit more national: the U.S opioid epidemic. One common reason people seek healthcare is to relieve pain, and the use of opiate drugs often mitigates this need. However, over the last decade, the rate of opioid-related hospitalizations has increased by 64%. Furthermore, in 2016, over 42,000 Americans died from an opioid overdose, representing a 27% increase from 2015. While rates differ among socio-economic backgrounds, this trend remains widespread (Lyden and Binswanger 124).

The first source, "The United States opioid epidemic, " addresses the history of the epidemic, the specifics and epidemiology of the opioid use disorder, and possible ways to address the epidemic. In the 1800s, the medical properties of opiates, compounds derived from opium plant matter, were recognized as a safe and effective way to relieve pain. With limited oversight, opioids, synthetic versions of opiates, were heavily medicated to aid common illnesses. With this came some medical colleagues, most notably Boston physician James F.A. Adams, speaking of its risks such as constipation, depression, and addiction. This pressure led to the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act in 1915, regulating the production and distribution of opioids. In the 1980s, as advocacy groups raised knowledge of the inadequate treatment of non-cancer pain, public attitudes toward opioid safety began to shift. As a result, more liberal opioid prescribing practices arose, which some argue contributed to the epidemic.

This journal article was authored by Jennifer Lyden and Ingrid A. Binswanger, respectively. Jennifer Lyden and Ingrid A. Binswanger were the authors of this journal paper. Lyden is a Denver Health and Hospital Authority member and teaches at the University of Colorado's Department of Medicine. Binswanger teaches at the same department. With this in mind, the authors seem credible. This piece's audience is clinicians, as its primary purpose is to recommend ways to reduce the stigma and inaccessibility to the treatment of opioid use disorder.

Because it targets clinicians, the tone of this text is strictly academic. It avoids abbreviations in total words, stresses facts, and employs straightforward language. This essay is in the medical genre, and it is from the journal Seminars in Perinatology, which publishes reviews on topics of interest to maternal healthcare professionals. When this piece was published, the opioid epidemic was an escalating public health crisis. Thus, the author has a negative stance towards the topic, as at the conclusion, he describes the mortality statistics as "grim" (Lyden and Binswanger 124).

The second source, "West Virginia's Opioid Crisis: A Journey of Despair, Love and Loss.", follows the life of former opioid addict Allie Rambo and her circle of friends from Greenbrier County, West Virginia. Her addiction started around seventh grade when she and her friend stole her mother's prescription drugs. Despite living in an unstable household, with multiple people dying of drug overdoses, she was self-assured, believing she wasn't hurting anyone but herself. However, the death of her friend Barbie, whom she described as "like a big sister," seemed to bring about an epiphany. Contrary to her dreams of traveling and playing basketball, she felt like she was going nowhere in life. After four months at a homeless shelter with her friend Gina, currently her wife, she gained another perspective: that she deserved happiness and freedom.

This piece's author and subject are Allie Rambo, a Greenbrier native, and former opioid addict. Not only is this an autobiography, but it also heavily uses photographs of Allie's drug use and experiences, which adds substantially to its credibility. This piece's audience is adult readers who have not experienced an opioid addiction. According to the introduction, the media often depict persons suffering from drug addiction as their most vulnerable. However, there is more to their lives than just their low points like all people. Therefore, the purpose of this piece is to change this perception by sharing the life of a former opioid addict.

Throughout the work, the author utilizes a melancholy tone. She reflects on her previous life with dread, saying she "didn't realize how much I'd wounded my family and my mother" or "a monster was created" when her friend injected morphine into a child named Peakay. Various photographs of Allie's experiences also add to the piece, depicting emotions such as depression, anger, and disorderliness. The genre of this piece is autobiographical and is published by The New York Times online. In this chronological piece from Greenbrier County, West Virginia, which had the highest death rate from opioid addiction, she views her addiction negatively. She describes her experiences as "really low" and how opioid drugs inhibited her from experiencing true freedom.

The third source, "Experiences of people with opioid use disorder during the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study," aims to capture the pandemic experiences of people with opioid use disorder (OUD) to improve services during public health emergencies and, in turn, reduce poor health consequences in this population. After interviewing 19 participants, they found that many people with OUD had difficulty accessing medical, social support, or harm reduction services during COVID-19 (Galarneau et al.).

The authors of this article are Lexis R. Galarneau, Jesse Hilburt, Zoe R. O'Neill, Jane A. Buxton, Frank X. Scheuermeyer, Kathryn Dong, Janusz Kaczorowski, Aaron M. Orkin, Skye Pamela Barbic, Misty Bath, Jessica Moe, Isabelle Miles, Dianne Tobin, Sherry Grier, Emma Garrod, and Andrew Kestler, respectively. These authors teach at various medical institutes, which adds to their credibility. As previously said, the goal of this article is to provide information that will help enhance health care for those who have OUD. As a result, this article is intended for medical professionals. The paper's purpose necessitates that the authors write in a formal tone. The genre of this piece is medicine and is published in the PLOS One journal, which covers primary research from any discipline within science and medicine. The journal published this article during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may cause a lack of timelessness. The authors believe that OUD is a vital health issue, as people who experience it may risk COVID-19 and other poor health outcomes.

The fourth source, "Once the Coronavirus Epidemic Dissipates, The Opioid Epidemic Will Rage," focuses on the challenges of treating opioid addiction and the difficulties faced by those who are suffering from it during the COVID-19 pandemic. Barriers include lack of waivers to provide addiction medicine, stigma, bias, and physician burnout. To make matters worse, health precautions such as social distancing and self-quarantine may be risk factors for relapse.

The author of this article is Dr. Navdeep S. Kang, a Mercy Health Director of Operations for Behavioral Health Services. This title adds to his credibility as the piece focuses on opioid addiction. The audience of this piece is healthcare professionals, as it comes from Health Affairs, a peer-reviewed healthcare journal. With this in mind, the article's purpose is to encourage the medical community to raise the national standard of care in addiction medicine.

The author uses a passionate and frustrated tone in his writing. He thinks it's a "gross oversight" and a "failure" of the medical industry that most doctors don't require the Drug Addiction Treatment Act waiver to prescribe buprenorphine. The genre of this piece is medical journalism and is, again, published from the Health Affairs. It was published during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may cause a lack of timelessness. Kang considers the epidemic "tragic" as he believes that the viral outbreak and necessary countermeasures due to COVID-19 will likely increase the number of addicts (Kang).

Despite these four pieces differing in writing styles, they share some similarities. They all have a negative stance towards the opioid epidemic and treat it with the utmost importance in a serious or formal tone. The first and last sources refer to barriers to opioid addiction treatment. The last two sources focus on difficulties, such as isolation and fear, faced by opioid addicts' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the differences, the second source takes a more personal approach to the topic, whereas the others take a more general view. Some positives include the epidemic's full context given by the first source, the personal experience shared by the second source, and the clear healthcare barriers explained by the fourth source. There are no particular ways I'd improve on the writing pieces.

Works Cited

Lyden, Jennifer, and Ingrid A Binswanger. “The United States opioid epidemic.” Seminars in perinatology vol. 43,3 (2019): 123-131. doi:10.1053/j.semperi.2019.01.001

Times, The New York. “West Virginia’s Opioid Crisis: A Journey of Despair, Love and Loss.” The New York Times, 17 Apr. 2019, [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/us/west-virginia-opioids.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/us/west-virginia-opioids.html).

Galarneau, Lexis R et al. “Experiences of people with opioid use disorder during the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study.” PloS one vol. 16,7 e0255396. 29 Jul. 2021, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0255396

Kang, Navdeep S. “Once the Coronavirus Pandemic Subsides, the Opioid Epidemic Will Rage: Health Affairs Forefront.” Health Affairs, 15 Apr. 2020, https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/forefront.20200407.290720/.