



The Emergence of Crack Cocaine Abuse

Edith Fairman Cooper

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Cocaine was once considered the elite's drug, with a price so high that only the very wealthy could afford it, and thought by many to be "safe." But during the 1980s, a dangerous and cheap derivative began appearing on the street. This drug, crack, is a cocaine freebase produced relatively safely and easily. Because of its low production costs, crack became popular among the lower classes, leading to an epidemic in the late 1980s, with estimates that over one million people used crack cocaine. The drug's name became synonymous with gangs, crime, and violence. Because of the intensity and apparent suddenness of the crack crisis, people began to wonder if there were any warning signs public officials missed and how exactly crack spread across the nation. Some even floated the theory that agencies like the CIA and FBI encouraged the use of crack in inner cities. No matter where it came from, crack is a menace that, though no longer "epidemic," must be combated along with all other illegal drugs.

This book makes a close examination of the development, responses to, and effect of the crack cocaine crisis in the United States. Included are descriptions of cocaine, crack, and the freebasing process. Also examined are the health questions surrounding the abuse problems and the allegations that governmental authorities had advance knowledge of crack. With the war on drugs a perpetual and critical battle in America, the facts and analyses presented here are of paramount importance to the understanding of a major issue of society's safety.

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