

COCAINE

Introduction

The topic I chose was cocaine. This is a highly addictive and highly abused drug in the United States. Cocaine is divided into two categories in the drug world. There is cocaine and crack cocaine. Both are highly addictive but carry different penalties with the legal system. For example, crack cocaine carries a heavier penalty for fewer grams than powder cocaine. Cocaine is not only a national issue; Connecticut shares the burden of this drug. This drug is not only a plague on society for health reasons, it is also economically problematic since it involves law enforcement and the judicial system to keep citizens safe from abusers who may exhibit dangerous drug seeking behaviors.

I chose this topic because I believe cocaine and crack cocaine are burdens on our society and if more people knew how much of a burden they may try to help those who are addicted or seek treatment for themselves if they are addicted.

Section 1: Background and Problem Statement

- **Web site #1:** Healthy People 2010 (Score: 21)
- **Web address:** <http://www.safetypolicy.org/hp2010/26ov.htm>
- **Information:**

This Web site was an overview of past statistics and trends involving cocaine including a breakdown of different races and ethnicities who are abusing the drug. It gives strategies on how education is the best prevention to abusing the drug. I think this was a good source of information since it listed the background and trends of cocaine abuse and laid out clear ideas on how to treat the problem at the root.
- **Web site #2:** U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (Score: 28)
- **Web address:** <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/cocaine.html>
- **Information:**

This Web site was very informative. It had a very good history of cocaine, why it is a problem in the U.S., when cocaine also became crack cocaine. It also listed what the drugs are categorized as in terms of drug classes for law enforcement. The street names are given; the short and long term health

effects are clearly listed in detail. There are also drug trafficking trends, DEA seizures, and a table of user populations. This is a very good Web site for anyone looking for facts on cocaine or crack cocaine.

- **Web site #3:** The Vaults of Erowid (Score: 28)
- **Web address:** <http://www.erowid.org.chemicals/cocaine/cocaine/html>
- **Information:**

This particular Web site was very informative on the history of cocaine. The full history of the drug was well laid out. It traces cocaine back to 3000 BC when chewing the coco plant was practiced throughout South America and the plant was thought to be from God. It goes on to trace cocaine's use in surgery in the 1800s to the 1900s when the adverse effects of cocaine were finally noted. If a person is looking for an extensive timeline on the history of cocaine, this is a very good Web site.

- **Web site #4:** Streetdrugs.org (Score: 27)
- **Web address:** <http://www.streetdrugs.org/cocaine.htm>
- **Information:**

I felt this Web site was useful because it addressed the problem with cocaine and crack cocaine trafficking. Throughout the world the trafficking of cocaine and crack cocaine causes extreme violence from exporting and importing countries because of the possible financial gain associated with the drug. This site also addresses the issues of HIV/AIDS because of injecting the drug and non-safe needle sharing practices. I felt this site was useful because it addressed not only the issues in the United States but also global issues.

Section 2: Research

- **Web site #1:** National Institute on Drug Abuse on Cocaine (Score: 27)
- **Web address:** <http://www.drugabuse.gov/PDF/NNCollections/NNCocaine.pdf>

- **Summary of the research:**

The research on this Web site but was very informative with a study done on bingeing on cocaine. This study showed that a two-hour cocaine binge can lead to further drug seeking behavior over a person who may not binge on cocaine. This drug seeking behavior is not limited to this one time of use; these effects can be long term. The site was mainly written for medical professionals so it was a little difficult to understand, but the information was clear.

- **Web site #2: Past and Future Research on the Crack-Cocaine – Domestic Violence Link (Score: 27)**

- **Web address: <http://www.ajph.org/cgi/content/full/95/9/1493>**

- **Summary of the research:**

The research on this Web site was about how there is an assumption of crack cocaine use and domestic or intimate partner violence. This is an unproven link. Since domestic violence has to do with one person's desire to control their partner, the use of crack cocaine is only an excuse of the abuser's behavior. I think this is a very important Web site for this type of information as it can help a person in the mental health field or in intimate partner violence situation understand that the use of crack cocaine is not a valid reason for abuse.

- **Web site #3: Single cocaine exposure in vivo induces long-term potentiating in dopamine neurons (Score: 20)**

- **Web address: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11385572>**

- **Summary of the research:**

This Web site was very difficult to understand. It was mainly all medical language not suitable for a casual user looking for information on cocaine. From what I could understand, even a single use of cocaine can have long-term effects and possible long-term addiction

- **Web site #4: Stress and addiction (Score: 16)**

- **Web address:**
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19234455?ordinalpos=5&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_DefaultReportPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum

- **Summary of the research:**

This was another very difficult Web site to understand because of the medical language. From what I could understand is people who tend to have a greater susceptibility to stress are more likely to become addicted to substances, including cocaine and crack cocaine. Also, the anxiety from stress was not alleviated from the use of cocaine or crack cocaine.

Section 3: Statistics

- **Web site #1: Office of National Drug Control Policy (Score: 26)**

- **Web address:**
http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/cocaine/cocaine_ff.html

- **Summary of the statistics:**

The statistics listed on this Web site are quite informative but are limited to drug use of school age children, young adults and prisoners. The Web site shows that between 1997 and 2004, use of cocaine and crack cocaine of state and federal prisoners is down, and the trend of high school and college students are trying and using the drugs less as well. While most of the statistics show that the drop in usage is under 1% for all the populations surveyed, it is a positive trend.

- **Web site #2: The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Score: 22)**

- **Web address:**
<http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/LIB/dmhas/infobriefs/052302.pdf>

- **Summary of the statistics:**

The statistics on this Web site show the percentage of cocaine and crack cocaine users who are seeking mental health services in Connecticut. The statistics show that the greater Hartford area has the highest percentage of cocaine and crack cocaine users seeking mental health help. It also shows that cocaine and crack cocaine is the second highest substance abused in the state. This was a very informative web site as the graphs show the numbers of users seeking help very clearly.

- **Web site #3: Greater Dallas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (Score: 27)**
- **Web address: <http://www.gdcada.org/statistics/cocaine/stat.htm>**
- **Summary of the statistics:**

This Web site was very good on giving statistics about the percentage of people addicted to cocaine and crack cocaine. It also offers the information that cocaine is a \$35 billion dollar illicit industry exceeding Columbia's top export, coffee. The percentage of people who become addicted, 75%, is a staggering number. I feel this site is a good site for someone who is looking for statistics that have staggering numbers.

- **Web site #4: Cocaine Statistics (Score: 28)**
- **Web address: <http://www.cocaine-addiction.info/cocaine-statistics.htm>**
- **Summary of the statistics:**

The statistics on this Web site not only address the primary use of cocaine and crack cocaine but a fact that 90% of cocaine or crack cocaine users smoked cigarettes, drank alcohol or tried smoking marijuana before trying cocaine is a good fact to know. It shows that there is a correlation to "less harmless drugs" being gateway drugs. It also addresses that young people are more likely to try cocaine than adults and the trends of cocaine use from the 1980s to today have risen and fell over time.

Section 4: Consumer Information

- **Web site #1: NIDA InfoFacts: Crack and Cocaine (Score: 27)**

- **Web address:** <http://www.nida.nih.gov/Infofacts/cocaine.html>

- **Summary of the information:**

I think this Web site was very informative to anyone seeking information on crack or cocaine. This site goes into extensive detail on how the drugs are abused, how it affects the brain, adverse effects and treatment options. A person who may not know much about the drugs would find this site very useful to learn about the negative effects cocaine and crack could have on a person.

- **Web site #2: Crack Cocaine Fast Facts (Score: 28)**

- **Web address:** <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs3/3978/index.htm>

- **Summary of the information:**

The information on this Web site is limited but informative at the same time. This site mainly focuses on crack cocaine rather than both powder cocaine and crack cocaine. All of the facts such as how it is produced, what it looks like and how it is abused are laid out, but in a limited capacity. If a person is looking for short answers on crack cocaine this is a good Web site, however, if someone is looking for extensive answers on the subject they should look elsewhere.

- **Web site #3: Cocaine Abuse (Score: 29)**

- **Web address:** <http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/cocaine-abuse>

- **Summary of the information:**

This Web site on cocaine abuse is very extensive and highly informative. The full topic of the history, uses (street and medical), why it is addictive and effects are thoroughly covered. A person seeking information on the subject who is looking for medical knowledge in layman's terms can be assured this Web site is very user friendly. While this is not a site that is a government, educational or an organization dedicated to only facts about cocaine or crack cocaine, I feel confident in its validity.

- **Web site #4: Cocaine and Pregnancy** (Score: 29)

- **Web address:**
<http://www.drugpolicy.org/library/research/cocaine.cfm>

- **Summary of the information:**

This Web site was interesting to me because it went into extensive detail about the negative effects on cocaine use while pregnant. None of the other sites addressed this issue and I feel it is important to know. The effects cocaine and crack cocaine is devastating on a fetus and the legal implications are quite harsh. I find this Web site was useful because every other site only addresses the effects on the primary user; this addresses what can happen to a secondary user during pregnancy and breast feeding.

Conclusions

- **Section 1: Background and Statement**
 - **The best Web site** U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
I thought this was the best Web site for this section because it has so much information. It covered the history of cocaine and crack cocaine. While this site was tied for the highest score within the section, I felt it had much more to offer a person looking to learn as much as possible about the drugs.
 - **The worst Web site** Healthy People 2010
This Web site did not specifically cover cocaine and crack cocaine. This also covered other abuse substances. The information about cocaine and crack cocaine was about half way down the page and not as clearly labeled, as I would have liked it to be. The information seemed to be secondary to alcohol abuse.
- **Section 2: Research**
 - **New information I learned include:** The idea that stress and addiction are directly linked together. I had always previously thought that stress had nothing to do with people who may have addictive personalities; now this shows that while it is not the cause for addiction. Perhaps this information could help mental help professionals in the substance abuse field give new ideas and abstinence techniques to their clients so they can maintain sobriety if they know what may trigger their addiction.

- **Section 3: Statistics**
 - **New statistics I learned include:** I have always known that cocaine was a very large export from Columbia; I did not know it was their largest export. It makes sense on why Columbia does not do more to stop the drug trade. If \$35 billion dollars was being exported from the United States, we would be lackadaisical on curbing that trade as well, even if it was illegal and caused violence throughout the world. This trade can stimulate an economy and create jobs. It is hard to ignore this fact even if it is a source of great harm.

- **Section 4: Consumer Information**
 - **The best Web site Cocaine Abuse**
This Web site had a plethora of information about cocaine and crack cocaine. A person not within the medical field can read through this site and find information on the history of cocaine, the limited medical uses and the effects it has on the human body. All of these topics are not simply touched on; there is extensive detail on all of the subsection within this page.
 - **The worst Web site Crack Cocaine Fast Facts**
While this Web site did have a lot of information on it, the information was limited to just crack cocaine and not powder cocaine. The information was not lengthy; it was given in no more than three to four line answers. I feel that someone looking to learn extensively about crack cocaine would have a better chance seeking this knowledge from a different site.

Presentation Outline

- Cocaine has been around since 3000 B.C. The coco leaves were chewed and thought to be sent from God
- Cocaine was used for medical purposes until the 1900s when the negative effects were found to outweigh the positives
- Cocaine use is declining. The usage percentage has dropped only less than 1% but the trends show that usage among teens and young adults is dropping.
- The theory for the decline in usage is education
- There has been a direct link to stress and addiction
- The link between domestic violence and cocaine has been shown as an excuse for abuse rather than a legitimate reason
- 90% of cocaine users smoked cigarettes, drank alcohol or smoked marijuana before trying cocaine showing that there “gateway drugs” are not just a theory
- The exporting of cocaine is a \$35 billion dollar industry in Columbia
- 75% of people who try cocaine become addicted
- A 2 hour binge on cocaine causes a greater risk for addiction
- The highest number of cocaine and crack cocaine abusers seeking help are in the Greater Hartford area in Connecticut
- Most states have harsh legal penalties for pregnant mothers who are caught abusing cocaine while pregnant.

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