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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

A GOOD STARTING POINT FOR DEVELOPING POLICIES

Drug Abuse (Scientific Publication No. 522)
Pan American Health Organization, Pan American Sanitary Bureau, Regional Office of the World Health Organization, 525 Twenty-third Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.20037, USA, Publication Date 1990, xiv + 198 pages, ISBN 92-75-11522-2: Price: Sw.fr. 50.00, US $15.00

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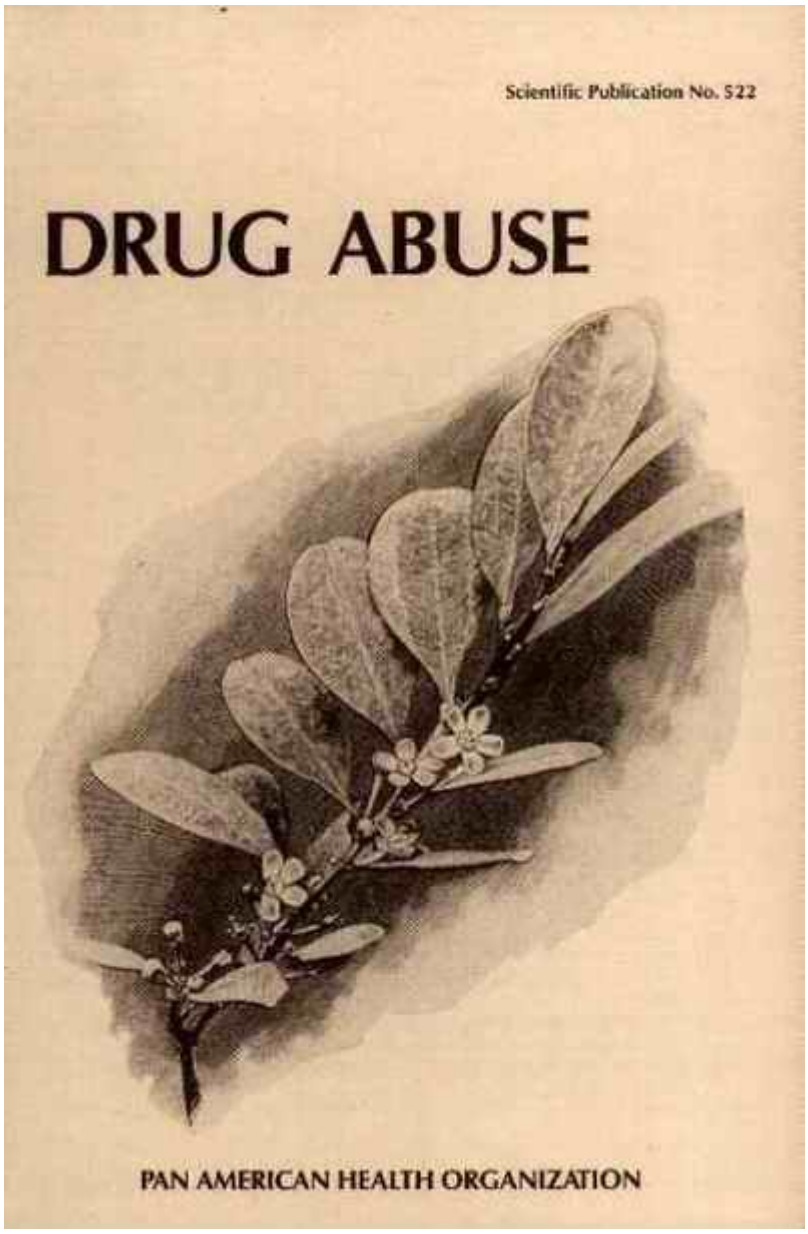

The responsibility of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) (as a specialised agency of the United Nations in the field of health) centres on the areas of assessment of the epidemiological characteristics of the drug epidemic, and prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. This special issue of the Bulletin of PAHO is divided into two parts.

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The first part contains a number of articles looking at research on alcoholism, tobacco use, and drug abuse that had been underway in the countries of the Americas in the late 1980's. Other papers include discussion of the methodologies used in drug abuse research, pointing out the necessity of developing alternative epidemiological surveillance systems, since short term studies need to be combined with the more standard long-term epidemiological research that is so useful for determining trends; papers looking at obtaining data on the effectiveness of prevention strategies; an evaluation of the applicability of an adapted Addiction Severity Index to Costa Rica population groups which was then a novel type of research important for Latin America.

The second part of the book presents the results of a first attempt to develop a regional information system. The epidemiological report on the use and abuse of psychoactive substances in 16 countries

of Latin America and the Caribbean is presented as the results of the questionnaire and includes the countries of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela. The information in many areas is incomplete but nevertheless provided a good starting point for developing policies.

This book may be of interest for those working in these countries for the historical data it presents.



-Margaret M. Stark
Dr Margaret M Stark LLM DGM DMJ(Clin) DAB is one of the foremost experts in Clinical Forensic Medicine. She has been a registered medical practitioner since 1981 and has worked in the field of clinical forensic medicine since 1989. She is a well-known authority on Drugs of abuse, and is the author of the best-selling "Symptoms and signs of Substance misuse" published by Greenwich Medical Media Ltd..

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