



D42 Cocaine Related Deaths in the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District, A Ten Year Study: 1996-2005

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the abuse of cocaine related to sex, age, and race in the Tarrant County population.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by providing the trend of cocaine abuse over a ten year period.

Cocaine, a tropane alkaloid, is a powerful stimulant and is derived from the leaves of coca plant, a plant whose stimulating qualities are well known to the ancient people of Peru, and other pre-Columbian South American societies. The name comes from the coca plant plus the alkaloid suffix -ine. There is a long list of prominent intellectuals, artists, and musicians who have used the drug ranging from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sigmund Freud, to President General Ulysses S. Grant. It is an illicit drug and excessive use can lead to convulsions, seizures, stroke, cerebral hemorrhage, or heart failure. Mixing with alcohol is a dangerous cocktail and can greatly increase the chances of sudden death. In fact it is the most common two drug mixture when sudden death occurs. The purpose of this study is to establish any pattern of cocaine related deaths, due to sex, age, race and geographic location in the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's district, which serves a tri-county population exceeding 2.2 million, between the years 1996-2005. The data was collected from all cases of natural, accident, suicide, and homicide deaths. The cause of death being a mixed drug overdose, out of which, at least one of the drugs being cocaine. The data is summarized as follows:

Table 1. 1996-2005 Deaths Related to Cocaine – Cause of Death

Cause:	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Accident	37	48	31	43	40	40	41	65	65	45
Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0
Natural	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0
Suicide	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	9	0	0
Undeterm	1	3	4	2	1	1	0	3	0	0
Total:	38	51	36	46	41	42	41	89	65	45

Table 2. 1996-2005 Deaths Related to Cocaine – Among Gender

Gender:	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Female	8	7	9	13	11	10	7	18	14	17
Male	30	44	27	33	30	32	34	71	51	28
Total:	38	51	36	46	41	42	41	89	65	45

Table 3. 1996-2005 Deaths Related to Cocaine – Among Race

Race:	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Black	11	11	12	14	13	11	8	25	15	17
Hispanic	7	4	6	4	2	4	5	10	8	7
White	20	35	18	28	26	27	27	53	39	15
Other	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	6
Total:	38	51	36	46	41	42	41	89	65	45



General Section – 2007

Table 4. 1996-2005 Deaths Related to Cocaine – Among Age Groups

Age:	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
0-19	2	3	1	2	1	2	2	6	6	1
20-29	10	9	6	13	8	6	8	15	14	11
30-39	16	20	14	14	19	14	13	22	14	11
40-49	6	15	13	12	9	15	15	31	18	15
50-59	4	3	2	4	4	4	3	14	12	7
60-69	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
70-79	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
80+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total:	38	51	36	46	41	42	41	89	65	45

While there was no pattern observed by way of increased abuse of cocaine over the ten year period, the following was noted:

- Males have abused (76.9%) over females (23.2%).
- Abuse among races indicated whites predominately abusing (58.2%), followed by blacks (27.7%) and Hispanics (11.5%).
- Among the age groups studied, predominately it is 30-39yr. (31.7%), followed by 40-49yr. (30.1%) and 20-29 (20.2%).

Cocaine, Cocaine Abuse, Socioeconomic Status