



Behind the Eight Ball: Sex for Crack Cocaine Exchange and Poor Black Women

Tanya Telfair Sharpe, PhD
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Behind the Eight Ball: Sex for Crack Cocaine Exchange and Poor Black Women, is a social epidemiological/ethnographic monograph presenting an account of the lives of inner city poor women addicted to crack cocaine, who exchange sex for crack to support their drug habits. The manuscript is the culmination of over ten years of research on the socio-economic changes in inner city neighborhoods that created the optimum conditions for a crack stronghold; crack cocaine's impact on the lives and health of inner city residents; and the social and familial consequences of crack addiction among poor, black women. The book places crack addiction, crack related prostitution and its consequences, STDs, HIV and pregnancy, into the context of the larger social issues of inner city poverty, and race, class and gender marginalization of black women.

Tanya Telfair Sharpe, PhD, MS, is a Research Behavioral Scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia

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Pre-publication comments

"Thought-provoking and heartfelt. . . . Provides a unique combination of the human tragedy of addiction and scientific strategies to address this genuine public health crisis. The blend of well-grounded epidemiology and case studies makes this book a contribution to the fields of drug addiction research and drug treatment practice. Students of public health, psychology, sociology, criminal justice, and anthropology will benefit from the careful recording of human tragedy reflected here. Despite the human degradation that is so well documented in this book, Dr. Sharpe moves beyond sensationalism and demonstrates how people transcend unimaginable circumstances."

- Charles B. Collins, PhD, Science Application Section Chief, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

"Amazing. . . . A must-read for anyone who cares about the health of women, children, and our nation's families. It is obvious to the reader that the ten years of research that went into this book has been a labor of love for author Dr. Tanya Telfair Sharpe. She sheds light on an often misunderstood epidemic in our inner city neighborhoods, addiction to crack cocaine, and the effects on black women and their families. Most compelling are the secret and tragic tales of the crack-addicted women who participated in Dr. Sharpe's research. Their stories are gut-twisting, disturbing, and all too real."

- Kathleen Tavenner Mitchell, MHS, LCADC, Vice President and National Spokesperson, National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

This excellent book is indispensable reading for anyone interested in gaining an in-depth knowledge of the complex issues affecting the spread of HIV in black, inner-city communities—a matter which should be regarded as of critical interest for all socially concerned Americans. The combination of Dr. Sharpe's extremely well-informed, scholarly approach with her evident compassion for the women she discusses and interviews has produced a highly compelling work which will disturb—and rightly so—anyone with a functioning conscience. Her book is more than a call to action; in its sensitive and detailed descriptions of women's lives wracked by cocaine addiction, and in its specific recommendations for programmatic change, it makes a crucially important contribution to health services policy and HIV prevention programs in inner-city neighborhoods."

- Arthur Margolin, PhD, Research Scientist, Department of Psychiatry, Yale University School of Medicine

"Absolutely fascinating. . . . required reading for anyone genuinely interested in understanding this intractable social problem. This book details the complicated life stories of women who use sex to support their addiction to crack cocaine. As a CDC researcher, Tanya Telfair Sharpe is especially well qualified to address the public health aspects of both unprotected sex and drug use. However, this book goes far beyond simply looking at the exchange of sex for crack as a public health crisis, and Dr. Sharpe assesses the practice in the context of racism, sexism, rape, the legacy of slavery, unequal power relationships, and life in a dominant patriarchal culture."

- Danny Wedding, PhD, MPH, Professor of Psychiatry and Director, Missouri Institute of Mental Health; Editor of *PsycCRITIQUES: Contemporary Psychology* APA Review of Books



Tanya Telfair Sharpe, PhD is an Anthropologist (BA, MS) and Sociologist (PhD). Her research interests include Black Family research, HIV/AIDS epidemiology, social epidemiology and social inequality, substance use during pregnancy, disparities in health among minorities and urban studies. Her most recent publication is ***Behind the Eight Ball: Sex for Crack Cocaine and Poor Black Women, October 2005***, an account of poor black women's struggles with crack cocaine addiction and the impact of crack cocaine addiction on poor black families. She currently serves as a Research Behavioral Scientist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Division of HIV/AIDS where she coordinates science and technology transfer from universities and other research institutions to community based organizations, and provides leadership on national HIV prevention education programs targeting at risk youth and illicit drug users. Though Dr. Sharpe began her career at CDC as an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Officer in HIV/AIDS epidemiology, her previous experiences include a National Institutes of Health/ National Institute on Drug Abuse research fellowship at Georgia State University, and university and college teaching.