DRUGS

HISTORY, EFFECTS, ADDICTION AND POLICY



ALESSANDRO NOTO

DRUGS

by **Alessandro Noto**

BOOK DESCRIPTION

Humans have altered their consciousness for as long as there are records of them: with beer brewed some thirteen thousand years ago, with mushrooms, roots and smoke, and eventually with laboratory chemistry. This book follows that thread through biology, history, economics, culture and politics, and it sets out to describe rather than to judge.

In seven parts, Alessandro Noto explains how the brain's reward system works and how dependence develops; traces drug use from shamans and the early civilizations through the opium trade, colonialism and the rise of the pharmaceutical industry; and describes receptors, tolerance, withdrawal and the major classes of substances. He examines the global drug market, cartels, money laundering and the competing models of prohibition, war on drugs and reform. Further chapters cover poverty and exclusion, families affected by addiction, treatment and prevention, the situation in Germany and the United States, the psychedelic renaissance and the future of drug policy. A lexicon of substances, an index and source notes complete the book.

Where research is inconclusive, the book says so and presents the competing positions. Risks are neither played down nor dramatized, and medical uses are neither hidden nor romanticized. The book offers context and explanation, not instructions for use.

This is an abridged English edition of the German original. It is no substitute for medical, legal or therapeutic advice.

Content note: addiction, overdose deaths, violence and organized crime are discussed factually.

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