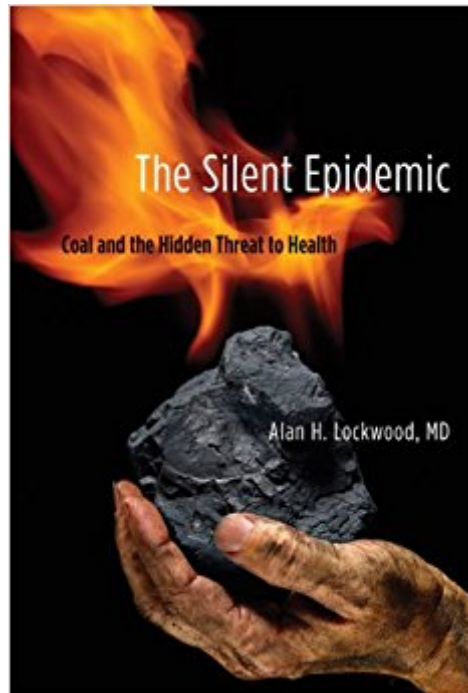




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# The Silent Epidemic: Coal And The Hidden Threat To Health (MIT Press)



## Synopsis

We will not find "exposure to burning coal" listed as the cause of death on a single death certificate, but tens of thousands of deaths from asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, heart attacks, strokes, and other illnesses are clearly linked to coal-derived pollution. As politicians and advertising campaigns extol the virtues of "clean coal," the dirty secret is that coal kills. In *The Silent Epidemic*, Alan Lockwood, a physician, describes and documents the adverse health effects of burning coal. Lockwood's comprehensive treatment examines every aspect of coal, from its complex chemical makeup to details of mining, transporting, burning, and disposal--each of which generates significant health concerns. He describes coal pollution's effects on the respiratory, cardiovascular, and nervous systems, and how these problems will only get worse; explains the impact of global warming on coal-related health problems; and discusses possible policy approaches to combat coal pollution. Coal fueled the industrial revolution and has become a major source of energy in virtually every country. In the United States, almost half of the energy used to generate electricity comes from burning coal. Relatively few people are aware of the health threats posed by coal-derived pollutants, and those who are aware lack the political clout of the coal industry. Lockwood's straightforward description of coal as a health hazard is especially timely, given the barrage of marketing efforts to promote coal as part of "energy independence." His message is clear and urgent: "Coal-fired plants make people sick and die, particularly children and those with chronic illnesses, and they cost society huge amounts of money desperately needed for other purposes."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Energy policy is health policy. In *The Silent Epidemic*, Alan Lockwood makes clear that coal is a pressing health concern. Just as a microbiology text analyzes bacteria, this book provides a guide for medical and public health thinking about coal. Highly recommended. (Howard Frumkin, Dean, School of Public Health, University of Washington) *The Silent Epidemic* provides an exacting and sobering account of one of the fastest growing problems confronting our planet -- pollution from coal. The analytical breadth as well as the readability of Alan Lockwood's study make it a unique and powerful resource for health care providers, policy makers and concerned citizens alike.

(Stanley B. Prusiner, Professor of Neurology, University of California, San Francisco)Dr.

Lockwood's prose is measured. His tone is dispassionate. And his prognosis is chilling. This book is must reading for environmental scientists and health professionals. It should also be on the bookshelves of energy policy makers, power company executives, urban planners, elected officials, and concerned citizens. Dr. Lockwood's diagnosis affects us all. (Philip J. Landrigan, M.D., MSc., Ethel H. Wise Professor of Community Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine)We've known for centuries that coal pollution is harmful and even deadly, but *The Silent Epidemic* painstakingly documents the full extent of coal's malignant effects on our health and society -- and adds urgency to ending our dependence on a fuel that deserves no place in a clean and healthy economy.

(Michael Brune, Executive Director, Sierra Club)

Alan H. Lockwood, M.D., is Emeritus Professor of Neurology and Nuclear Medicine in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo and a Senior Scientist at Physicians for Social Responsibility. He is the author of *The Silent Epidemic: Coal and the Hidden Threat to Health* (MIT Press).

It's a good book and a good education about the harm from coal and the hidden costs when using coal to create electricity. When pressing 5 stars, the text says I love the book. I don't really because the topic is very serious and as the book shows coal harms health and the Earth. One thing the book didn't say (and it's obvious anyway) is that coal is benign if we just don't mine or burn it.

"The Silent Epidemic: Coal and the Hidden Threat to Health" is a timely, necessary, and balanced examination of a subject that elicits highly emotional response in our society, both pro and con. The subject is approached carefully, and presented in a rational, dispassionate, informed manner. The book is well organized, and readers are explicitly invited to concentrate on areas that interest them most if they wish. Some of the material presented is quite technical, but Dr. Lockwood has taken care to make it accessible to the interested general reader. This is an subject that is important today, and both public and private discourse can only be enriched by an increased level of carefully vetted information.

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