ANIL AGGRAWAL'S
Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology
The world's first online journal devoted entirely to forensic medicine and toxicology · Published 1 January and 1 July

VOL. 2, NO. 2
Downloaded from www.anilaggrawal.com · ISSN 0972-8074 (Online) · https://www.anilaggrawal.com/ij/vol_002_no_002/reviews/tb/page014.html

Technical Books Section

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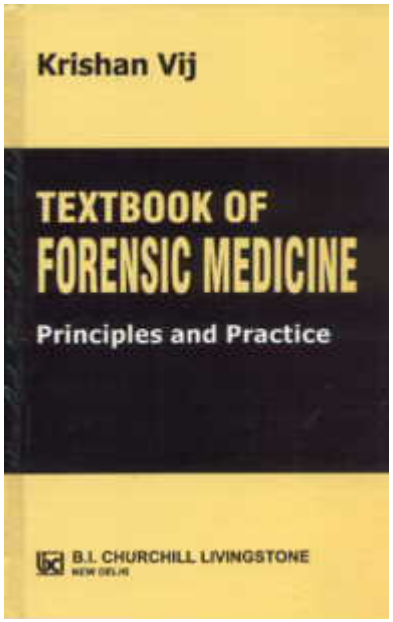
A NEW TEXTBOOK OF FORENSIC MEDICINE

TextBook of Forensic Medicine: Principles and Practice *by* Krishan Vij
B.I. Churchill Livingstone Pvt. Ltd., 54 Janpath, New Delhi-110001; xx + 837 pages: ISBN 81-7042-177-2. Publication Date 2001: Hardcover Price: Indian Rupees 320.00



The Textbook of Forensic Medicine - Principles and Practice by Krishan Vij, Professor and Head of Department of Forensic Medicine, Chandigarh, opens with Forewords and Prefaces outlining the purpose of this book. The book is principally aimed at young doctors and doctors of other specialities rather than pure forensic pathologists. Having said that, this should not deter forensic clinical practitioners from considering this book. It gives the reader a variety of forms of text to choose from, from the traditional statements of fact to case reports to personal experience and reflection. It is laid out in five sections ranging from basic forensic practice to death and dying to injuries to clinical forensic medicine to legal aspects of medical practice and extends for over 800 pages. The print is clear to read and the majority of illustrations throughout the book are in black and white with occasional colour photographs.

Overall this is an easy to read book fulfilling the preface in the fact that it is aimed at junior doctors. The text is extensive covering all aspects of forensic medicine that a doctor may come across in clinical practice and it is written in an concise easy to read manner. The illustrations are appropriate to the text comprising of a variety of tables, line drawings and photographs. Many of the line drawings are not original to the book and appear in other forensic texts. Some of the black and white photographs are not easy to see.

The only significant criticism about this book is its lack of references. The author has chosen to add key references within the text and has chosen not to reference the chapters in the standard European or United States of America style. As it could be argued that references go rapidly out of date this may not be a fault with the book although most readers would agree that there are a number of classic key references to any subject which would support the author's views. A benefit of this book however, is the extensive section at the beginning relating to the Indian legal system. For those not acquainted with the system it is a fascinating and informative read.

Although ultimately the forensic textbooks on the world market at present inevitably overlap due to the nature of the subject, I feel that I would recommend the purchase, especially to junior doctors, and especially to those practicing within the Indian continent where the legal aspects are particularly pertinent.

--Professor Guy Rutty,
Division of Forensic Pathology,
Robert Kilpatrick Building,
Leicester Royal Infirmary,
PO Box 65, Leicester, LE2 7LX, UK

Email: gnr3@le.ac.uk
Dr. Guy Rutty is on the editorial board of *Anil Aggrawal's Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology*. More information about him can be obtained by clicking here.

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