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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

(Page 15 c - Review by Benjamin Swift, UK)

FEATURED BOOK

A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW MODERN FORENSIC PATHOLOGY BOOKS SHOULD BE PRODUCED



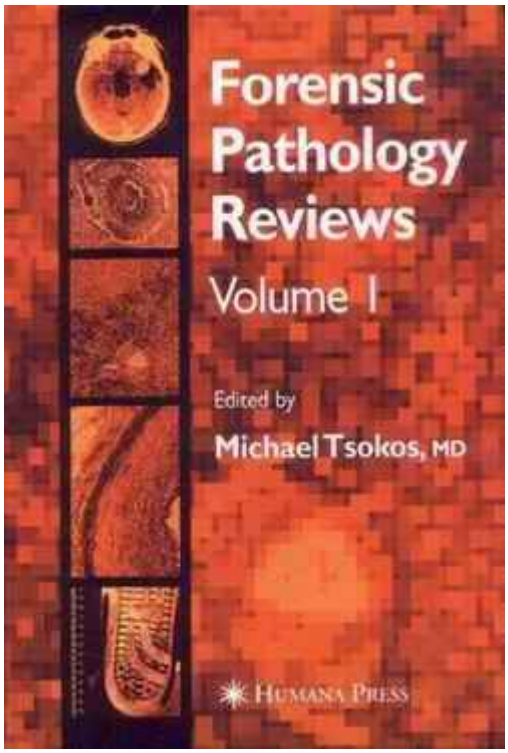
Rating : 8.5
★★★★★★★★½
(8.5/5)

[Excerpts] [Interview with Michael Tsokos]

Forensic Pathology Reviews, Vol. 1, *Edited by* Michael Tsokos. Hard Bound, 6" x 9". Humana Press Inc., 999 Riverview Drive, Suite 208, Totowa, New Jersey 07512; Publication Date 15 April, 2004. xii + 365 pages, ISBN 1-588-29-414-5. Price $99.50

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There are some that consider forensic pathology to be a relatively static science, the knowledge base undergoing little change. Although many aspects remain subjective there continues to be a drive towards evidence-based research within the field, aiming to produce a greater understanding of the causation of injuries, the histopathological changes associated with traumatic or chemical insults and the detection and interpretation of toxicological substances, amongst many topics. It is upon this continued academic effort that Tsokos has produced the first volume in a projected series entitled "Forensic Pathology Reviews".

Aiming to appeal to students, trainees and established medico-legal experts alike the book encourages critical analysis of recently published topics by drawing together the classical texts of older reference books and the modern analytical techniques into a collection of easy to read chapters. The result is a book that allows trainees to access recent advances in forensic pathology whilst equally permits continued professional development of the qualified forensic pathologist.

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Chapters include the timing of cortical contusions in human brain injury, diagnostic and medico legal problems with sudden infant death syndrome, sudden cardiac death, resuscitation-related injuries and postmortem alcohol interpretation. Though never claiming to be a reference textbook in its own right, the degree of information available within many of the chapters far exceeds that found in established tomes; with the promise of more volumes to come, the anticipated result is one of an expanding and up-to-date knowledge base.

Paradoxical undressing and hide-and-die syndrome. The bodies of two men, 34 and 52 years old, were found lying in a public park in a prone position on the ground, one in front of and one underneath a park bench. Both men were under considerable influence of alcohol (280 and 300 mg/dL, respectively). On the morning the men were found, the ambient temperature was 9^0C (38^0F). Forensic autopsy showed the typical findings of lethal hypothermia. (This figure comes from page 269 - Chapter on Lethal Hypothermia)



The concept of a collection of review articles as a means of update is not novel; several histopathology series exist (notably the "Recent Advances in Histopathology" series) including those within forensic pathology itself (for example, the "Recent Advances in Autopsy Practice" series edited by Rutty). However, what Tsokos does is to draw together a collection of articles in a concise and well conceived manner. The illustrations (all monochrome) are all of a quality often lacking in modern textbooks, though somewhat sparse in number; all images are sharply focused, well cropped and informative, adding to the accompanying text. The chapters are well referenced (the chapter on central nervous system alterations in drug abuse alone has 550 references) and, importantly for an English language text, it produces critical analysis of many papers published within non-English language forensic journals, increasing the accessibility to such valuable pieces of research.

The main criticism of many similar publications is the over-reliance upon the "case report" publications, thankfully kept to a minimum within this volume. However, a minor point would be the possible errors in translation noted scattered throughout: the incorrect statement that stab wounds equate to lacerations (in "Morphological Findings in Burned Victims") is particularly jarring given the excellence with which the rest of the book has been produced.

Overall Tsokos' book is a good example of how modern forensic pathology books should be produced; affordable, readable, knowledgeable and both well referenced and illustrated. It is hoped that this first volume is an indicator of an 'essential reading' series for all within the field.



-Benjamin Swift
Dr. Benjamin Swift is on the editorial board of Anil Aggrawal's Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology. Click image to have more information about him.

Review 1 by Erik Edston, Sweden

Review 2 by V.V.Pillay, India

Review 3 by Benjamin Swift, UK

Review 4 by Ronald Wright, USA

Some Excerpts from this book

An Exclusive interview with Michael Tsokos

Other reviews of this book:

1. Review by J. Scott Denton, MD, Chicago, Ill in *Archives of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine*: Vol. 129, No. 2, pp. 269 (February 2005) : the linked page (?request=get document&doi=10.1043%2F1543 2165(2005)129%3C269:FPRV%3E2.0.CO%3B2) to access.
2. Review by Victor W. Weedn, M.D., J.D., Visiting Professor, Duquesne University, School of Law and Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences, Pittsburgh, PA in *Journal of forensic sciences Jan. 2005*: Vol. 50, No. 1 (Published 15 Dec. 2004): the linked page (4737) to access.
3. Review by Douglas Posey, M.D. in *Newsletter of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors*: Winter 2004 issue: the linked page (bookreview) to access.

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