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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

...AN INVALUABLE BOOK FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS ...Overall, I am very impressed with the book, and can heartily recommend the book to all undergraduates. Even postgraduates would find this book useful for quick recapitulation. I must congratulate the authors for giving the overburdened student the right type of book...

Concept maps in Forensic Medicine and Toxicology – A Quick Review for Exams, 1st Edition, by Y.P. Raghvendra Babu, S. Manjunath and Ritesh G. Menezes. softcover, 9" x 7.5".
Peepee Publishers and distributors (P) Ltd, 7/31, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Post Box-7243, New Delhi-110002, India. , Email: peepee160@yahoo.co.in; peepee160@rediffmail.com. Publication Date 2010. xvi + 154 pages, ISBN 81-8445-082-6. Price Indian Rupees 160.00

Email Ritesh G. Menezes, one of the authors, by clicking here

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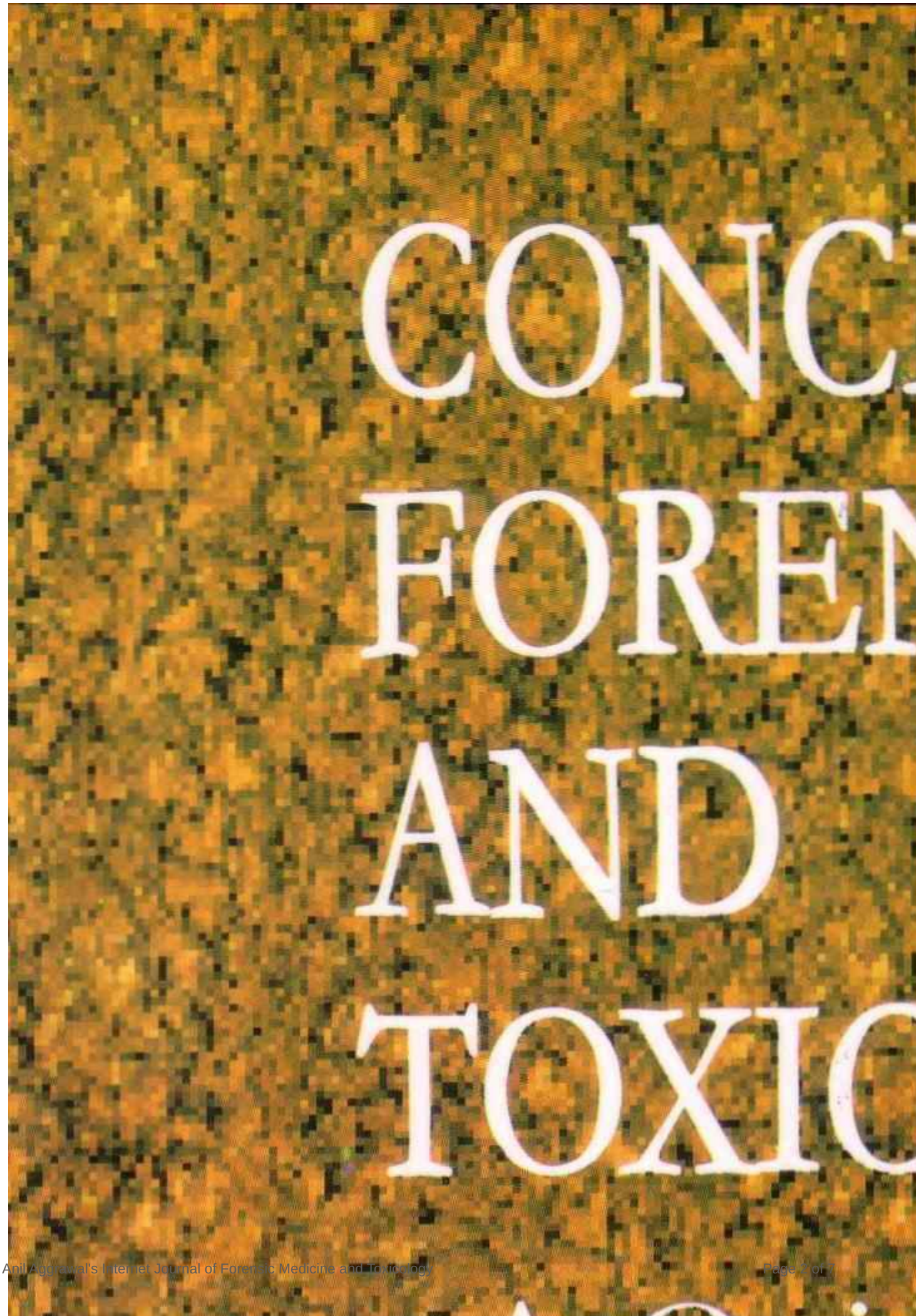
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There are currently a number of books on forensic medicine and toxicology available to students, but unfortunately none gives material to them in short, crisp, no-nonsense chunks of useful information. The overburdened student of today is not interested in thick tomes that impart scholarly ideas, but in shorter textbooks that can be quickly assimilated. I have had personal tête-à-têtes with several of my students regarding the type of book they would welcome most. They have demurely confessed that in today's world of twenty-20 cricket, no one is interested in a five-day match, implying that they do not have time for a big text book, the so-called equivalent of a "five day test match". Everybody wants to see a "twenty-20"!

The authors of this short, highly useful book seem to have gotten this message. The book was delivered to me at 1 pm in my room at MAMC by a messenger, and by 4 pm, I was through with this book. The fact that I could revise my entire forensic medicine knowledge in a matter of three hours, is an apt testament of the utility of this book. Not only was I able to revise my existing knowledge, interestingly I even learnt a lot of new facts.

A sample page from the book under review. It gives a bird's eye view description of wounds produced b

Exit wounds:
Refer textbooks for details
- Out shoot wounds.
- Injuries due to seco missiles.

Extreme range:
- Wobbling / yaw /tumbling of bullet.
- Irregular.

Medium range: (5-6 feet)
- Abrasion collar.
- Grease collar.

Intermediate / short rang
(outside range of flame & muzzle flash)
- Powder tattooing.

View this book on Amazon

Essentially this book gives one “capsule” to the student for each major chapter taught to the undergraduates in forensic medicine and toxicology. In the center (of each “capsule”), there is a black box, mentioning the name of the topic the authors want to discuss. From this box radiate a number of arrows pointing to a large number of small and big boxes scattered all around. Each box gives some relevant information about that topic, in small bullet type forms. From some of these boxes, more arrows emanate, which lead to further information in bulleted form. The authors have called this way of presenting information, a “concept map”. To my mind, this is a kind of mental map, which the student can absorb very quickly and retain for a longer time. Good memory is that which is like wax when impressions are made on it, and like cement when impressions tend to erode. Not all of us have this type of memory, but a good book can certainly help. Good “concept maps” like the ones the authors have presented in this book, seem to help in this direction. Knowledge is acquired quickly and hopefully will not fade for a long time. We are reproducing two such pages here, so the reader would know what I am talking about.

A sample page from the book under review. All relevant information on organophosphates that is expe

Pralidoxime: (pyridin 2-aldoxime methiiodide)

- Cholinesterase reactivator.
- Counteracts nicotinic affects.
- Regenerates ChE.

Oximes:

Dose: 1-2 gms I.V. every 10-15". Dose repeated after every 6-12 hours.

G

- ➢
- ➢
- ➢
- ➢

Specific:

Atropine:

- Blocks Ach activity at muscarinic recep
- Decrease activity at nicotinic receptors CNS.

Dosage:

- Initially 2-4mg for adults & 0.05mg / kg children – i.m/i.v.
- Repeat every 5-15min till cessation of -sympathetic system effects.

Cholinesterase more information:

- Based on Michel method (normal valu cell CHE activity) (PH / hr)

I would like to mention some nuggets which the authors give in this book. On the very first page, one of the differential diagnoses of rigor mortis mentioned is chemical stiffening (embalming), which is usually not mentioned in textbooks. On page 17, I was very pleased to see the authors mentioning “But for test”. I have seen very few books, where this test is mentioned. As we all know this test refers to a situation where the patient must prove that harm would not have occurred ‘but for’ the negligence of the doctor. What is very gratifying is that virtually on every page, the authors have given a “further reading” list, which the students can explore, particularly postgraduate students.

The book contains forewords by three most prominent professionals – one by my favorite Jason Payne James. I am pleased to learn that even Jason has a very good opinion about the book.

Overall, I am very impressed with the book, and can heartily recommend the book to all undergraduates. Even postgraduates would find this book useful for quick recapitulation. I must congratulate the authors for giving the overburdened student the right type of book.

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