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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

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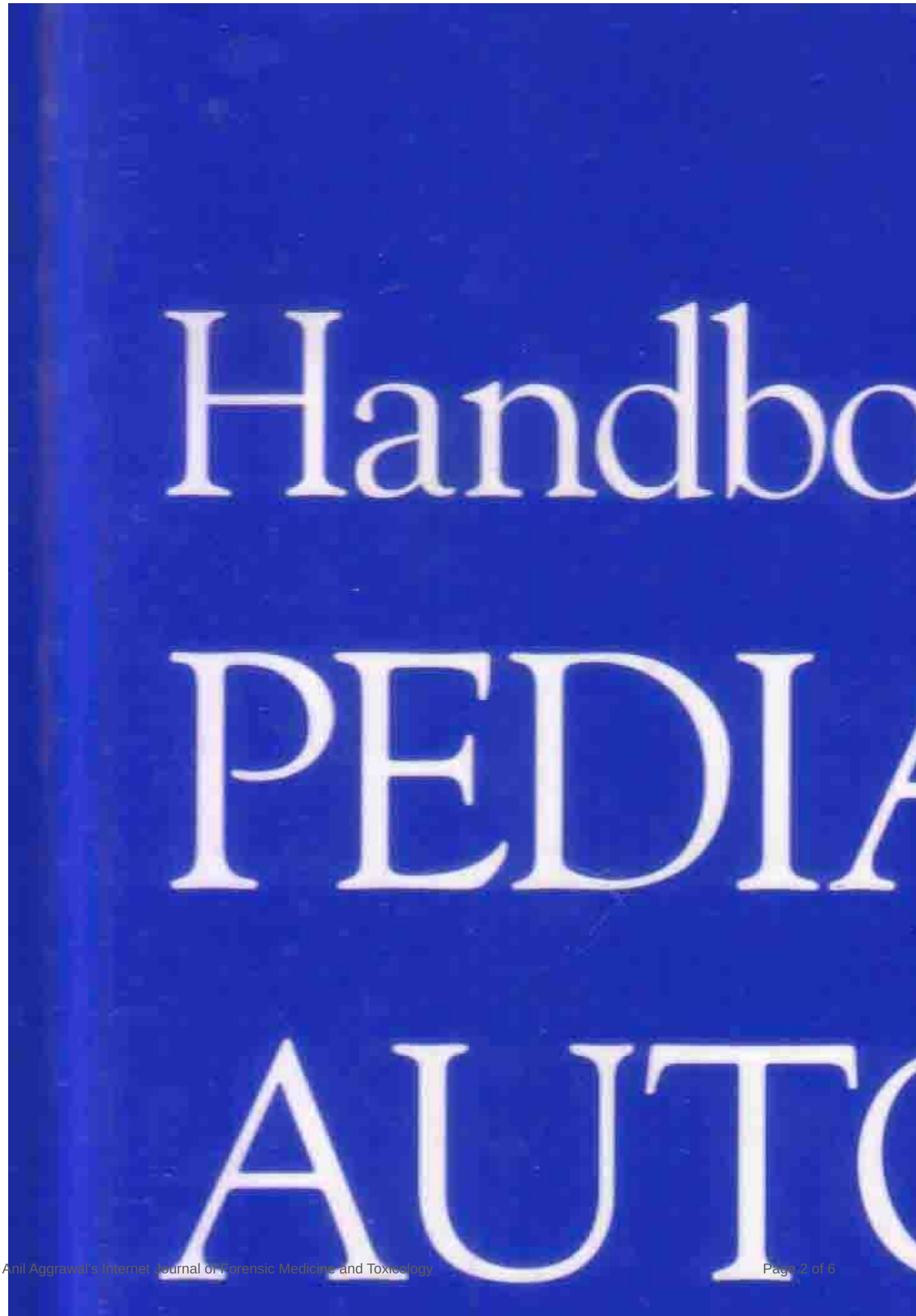
...FEATURED BOOK : MAIN PAGE A VERY WELL ORGANIZED BOOK ...Dr. Gilbert-Barness and her colleague, Diane Debich -Spicer have succeeded admirably in covering a broad, but very detailed subject. The overall organization of the book is excellent. The chapters are well organized. The photographic illustrations are clear and well placed. Pathologists will find the abundance of appendices listing standard developmental processes, weights, and measurements to be extremely helpful in the autopsy room. This text will be of great use in the autopsy room to those physicians tasked with the examination of the embryo, fetus, or pediatric patient... [Main page] Reviews | [1] [2] [3] [4]...

Handbook of Pediatric Autopsy Pathology, 1st Edition, *by* Enid Gilbert-Barness and Diane E. Debich-Spicer, Hardback, acid-free Paper, 11.3" x 8" x 1.2" [Comes with a CD]
Springer, [imprint - Humana], 233 Spring Street, New York, NY 10013, USA ; Publication Date: 28 January 2005. xiv + 531 pages, ISBN-10: 158829224X, ISBN-13: 978-1588292247, E-ISBN 1-59259-673-8. Price $225.00.

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Dr. Enid Gilbert-Barness, and her co-author, Diane Debich-Spicer have done an excellent job in covering a subject that is both huge in breadth and complicated in detail. The Handbook of Pediatric Autopsy Pathology and its accompanying companion CD with color plates is over 500 pages in length. In addition to having excellent photographic examples and diagrammatic illustrations, there is considerable text covering disease processes and abnormalities found in the pediatric patient.

The text is well organized into five basic parts: general principles, techniques, developmental disorders, organ systems and metabolic disorders, and special considerations. The shortest of these parts, that of general principles, defines some of the common language used on death certificates and discusses the role of the medical examiner in death investigation. Further, the general principles section outlines the benefits of the performance of an autopsy, and discusses the process involved in anatomic gift donation. Part 2 of the book covers techniques in pediatric autopsy pathology. Techniques are subdivided into three main categories: the pediatric autopsy (including the fetus, newborn, and child); the examination of the human embryo; and the examination of the placenta. The chapter devoted to the pediatric autopsy contains an abundance of helpful illustrations including the development of the brain and various stages of maceration in stillbirth. Additionally, there are more than 40 reference appendices in this chapter, covering everything from organ weights through protocols for gross examination of the brain to conversion factors for converting metric measurements to English measurements. The chapter dealing with the examination of the human embryo is extremely well illustrated with both photographs and diagrams. As with the proceeding chapter, this chapter has an abundance of helpful appendices listing standard weights and measurements for the embryo and fetus. The final chapter in part 2 deals with examination of the placenta. There are excellent gross and microscopic illustrations, as well as artistic illustrations of proper sampling techniques.

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Part 3 of the Handbook of Pediatric Pathology is entitled “Developmental Disorders.” Developmental disorders are further subdivided into three separate chapters covering hydrops, chromosomal defects, and congenital abnormalities. The chapter on hydrops is the shortest of the three in this section. The chapter is well organized and provided easy access to charts for those pathologists faced with the examination of an infant with hydrops. Laboratory studies are divided into those necessary for the mother versus the baby. The chapter entitled “Chromosomal Defects” provides abundant tables to which the prosecting pathologist may refer, as well as excellent illustrations of various anatomic findings classically seen in specific chromosomal defects, such as rocker bottom feet in trisomy18. The final chapter in part 3, chapter 7, covers congenital abnormalities. Again, as with the proceeding chapters, the text is well organized and well supported with abundant tables, diagrams, and photographic examples. This chapter is supported by appendices with illustrations that will be useful in the autopsy room.

…The chapter on the cardiovascular system has excellent diagrammatic illustrations of positions of the heart within the chest, possible types of atrioventricular relationships, and methods of dissection for examination of the cardiac conduction system. As with the other sections, the text is well organized, and well supported by both organizational tables and abundant photographic examples. The chapter is further supported by abundant appendices with standard weights and measurements for the cardiovascular system…

Part 4 of the textbook is entitled “Organ Systems and Metabolic Disorders.” Part 4 consists of 11 separate chapters covering all of the major organ systems, with a final chapter dedicated to metabolic diseases. The chapter on the cardiovascular system has excellent diagrammatic illustrations of positions of the heart within the chest, possible types of atrioventricular relationships, and methods of dissection for examination of the cardiac conduction system. As with the other sections, the text is well organized, and well supported by both organizational tables and abundant photographic examples. The chapter is further supported by abundant appendices with standard weights and measurements for the cardiovascular system. Chapter 9 deals with the respiratory system and has excellent photographic examples of both gross specimens and photomicrographs. Chapter 10, dealing with the gastrointestinal system provides good support of the well organized text with diagrammatic and photographic illustrations of various malformations. Chapter 11, dealing with the liver, gallbladder, biliary tract and pancreas, and chapter 12, the renal system, both continue the organized text format with abundant and appropriate gross and microscopic illustrations. Chapter 12 also includes a detailed appendix documenting renal and urinary tract abnormalities in various genetic disorders and malformation syndromes. Chapter 13, entitled “Male and Female Genitourinary Systems” provides excellent flow charts and illustrations for pathologists faced with examination of a case with ambiguous genitalia. Chapter 14, dealing with the central nervous system, supports the well organized text with abundant gross photographs and diagrammatic illustrations. The chapter concludes with an appendix detailing defects of the closure of the neural tube. Chapter 15, covering the thymus, spleen, lymph nodes, and immunodeficiency is relatively short compared to the other organ system chapters. Most of the photographic illustrations in this chapter are gross photographs. There are well organized tables outlining findings in immunodeficiency diseases. Chapter 16 deals with the skeletal system. Well organized tables and excellent gross and radiographic illustrations support the text discussion of various dysplasias. Chapter 17, “Eye and Adnexa Sectioning,” focuses more on technique, and might have been better placed within Part 2, “Techniques.” This chapter includes both gross and photomicrographic illustrations of disease processes or anomalies affecting the eye. Chapter 18, “Metabolic Diseases,” provides concise discussions of various enzyme abnormalities with good photographic illustration. The well organized tables provide a source for handy reference, and may be of use for quick reference while in the autopsy suite.

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The final part of the text, Part 5, is entitled “Special Considerations.” This final portion of the book is divided into 4 chapters, covering Sudden Infant Death, Pediatric Forensic Pathology, Special Procedures, and Infection Control and Biologic Hazards in the Autopsy. Chapter 19, Sudden Infant Death, begins with a discussion of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome as defined by Beckwith, and then moves into related discussions involving unsafe sleeping conditions, and various disease processes presenting as Sudden Infant Death (for example long Q-T Syndrome and myocarditis). Chapter 20 deals with the subject of pediatric forensic pathology and emphasizes the importance of scene investigation and integration of information in the forensic autopsy. In addition to discussion and illustration of blunt trauma in physical abuse, this chapter also covers the issues of neglect,

starvation, dehydration, and Münchhausen Syndrome by Proxy. Chapter 21 is entitled “Special Procedures.” The special procedures discussed in this chapter include the use of electron microscopy, preliminary chain reaction, cytogenetics, fibroblasts cultures, and postmortem chemistry studies. The final chapter of the text, chapter 22, is entitled “Infection Control and Biological Hazards in the Autopsy.” This relatively short chapter (when compared to those covering various disease states and congenital anomalies) discusses infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis B. The chapter concludes with a discussion of disinfection, decontamination and disposal of substances and wastes involved in certain infectious cases.

Overall, Dr. Gilbert-Barness and her colleague, Diane Debich -Spicer have succeeded admirably in covering a broad, but very detailed subject. The overall organization of the book is excellent. The chapters are well organized. The photographic illustrations are clear and well placed. Pathologists will find the abundance of appendices listing standard developmental processes, weights, and measurements to be extremely helpful in the autopsy room. This text will be of great use in the autopsy room to those physicians tasked with the examination of the embryo, fetus, or pediatric patient.

-Tracey S. Corey

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