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. 12, NO. 1
Downloaded from www.anilaggrawal.com · ISSN 0972-8074 (Online) · https://www.anilaggrawal.com/ij/vol_012_no_001/reviews/tb/page004.html

Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

...A WELCOME ADDITION TO THE LITERATURE OF FORENSIC PATHOLOGY ...we would just like to say that the book is a welcome addition to the long list of books on forensic pathology, especially for the audience for which it specially caters too, as for them, it is probably the best book of forensic pathology... Rating : 10/10...

Forensic Pathology for Police, Death Investigators, Attorneys, and Forensic Scientists, 1st Edition, by Joseph Prahlow. Hardcover, 9.3 x 6.4" x 1.5".
Humana Press, (An imprint of Springer Science + Business Media, LLC), 233 Spring Street, New York, NY 10013. Publication Date March 3, 2010. 615 pages, ISBN-10: 1588299759; ISBN-13: 978-1588299758. Price $199.00.

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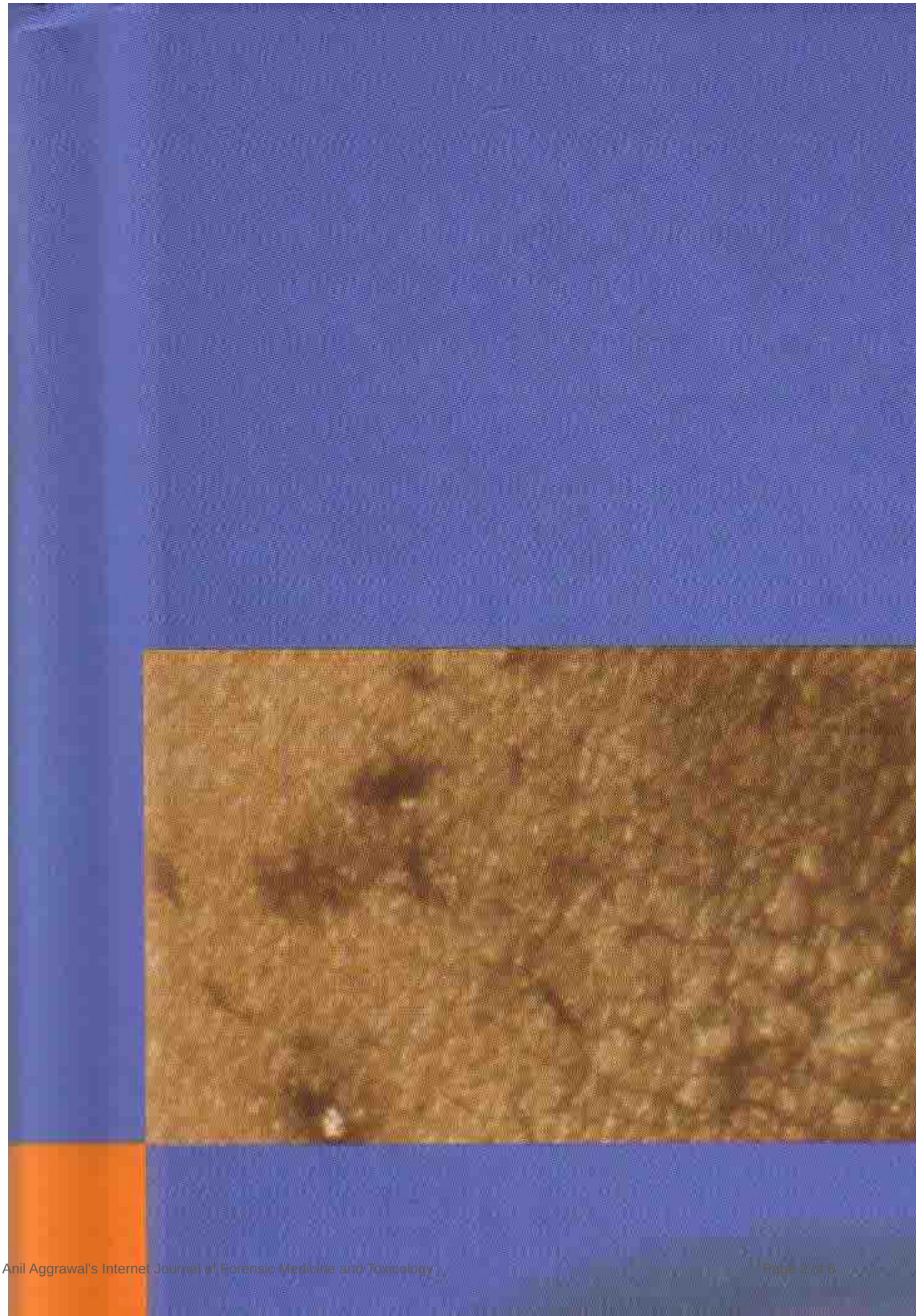

*A*nother year, another new book of forensic pathology. With the market being already loaded with books on forensic pathology, why would I buy a new one? What new I expect to get from this book which is not present in the ones I already have? The answer to all such questions lie in my profession. If I am a forensic pathologist, I may probably be having enough books and other stuff to say that I don't need this book. But if I am involved with crime investigation in any other way, like a police, or attorney or judge or any other profession that deals with crime and its investigation, I MUST have this book in my library and must go through it thoroughly. This difference is due to the way the book has been conceptualised and presented. As is mentioned in the Foreword, the book is specifically meant for the people who interact with forensic pathologists on a regular or not so regular basis. Therefore, Dr. Prahlow has tried to keep the language and information provided in the book to the bare minimum so that a non pathologist gets only that many details that are required by him. And it must be said that he has succeeded in his endeavour.

Coming on to the book, as is mentioned earlier, the book starts in a very basic manner, describing the basics of the curriculum of medical school and the basics of pathology. Though very good for someone who has no idea about the same and wants to know what it is to be in a medical school, we felt that this section could have been pruned a little, or even omitted altogether, without making much dent in the overall quality of the book, as the intended audience is more likely to be concerned with the forensic medicine and forensic pathology and not the medical or pathology curriculum in the medical school. This could have reduced both the bulk as well as the cost of the book.

…From introduction, the author moves to the basics of pathology and then to the basics of death investigation and a very brief overview of the human anatomy and physiology. This is an important aspect of this book as most books of forensic pathology, with pathologists as the audience, do not provide this information, which is quite natural as the intended audience there have passed the medical school and are already well versed in these disciplines…

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Part II and III of the book deal with specific topics of forensic pathology. Starting with autopsy, the author then goes on to discuss other aspects of forensic pathology, as is the normal practice in most books of this subject. Almost all the topics in the book subsequently have been dealt with adequately with good illustrations using proper photographs. In addition, the description is more in lay terms than medical terms, thereby helping people to understand the topics and sub-topics better. The list of references mentioned at the end of each chapter is good, though not too exhaustive, again showing that it has deliberately been kept to only those that are actually required for the audience.

In the end we would just like to say that the book is a welcome addition to the long list of books on forensic pathology, especially for the audience for which it specially caters too, as for them, it is probably the best book of forensic pathology.

Review by -*Puneet Setia and Avneesh Gupta*





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