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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

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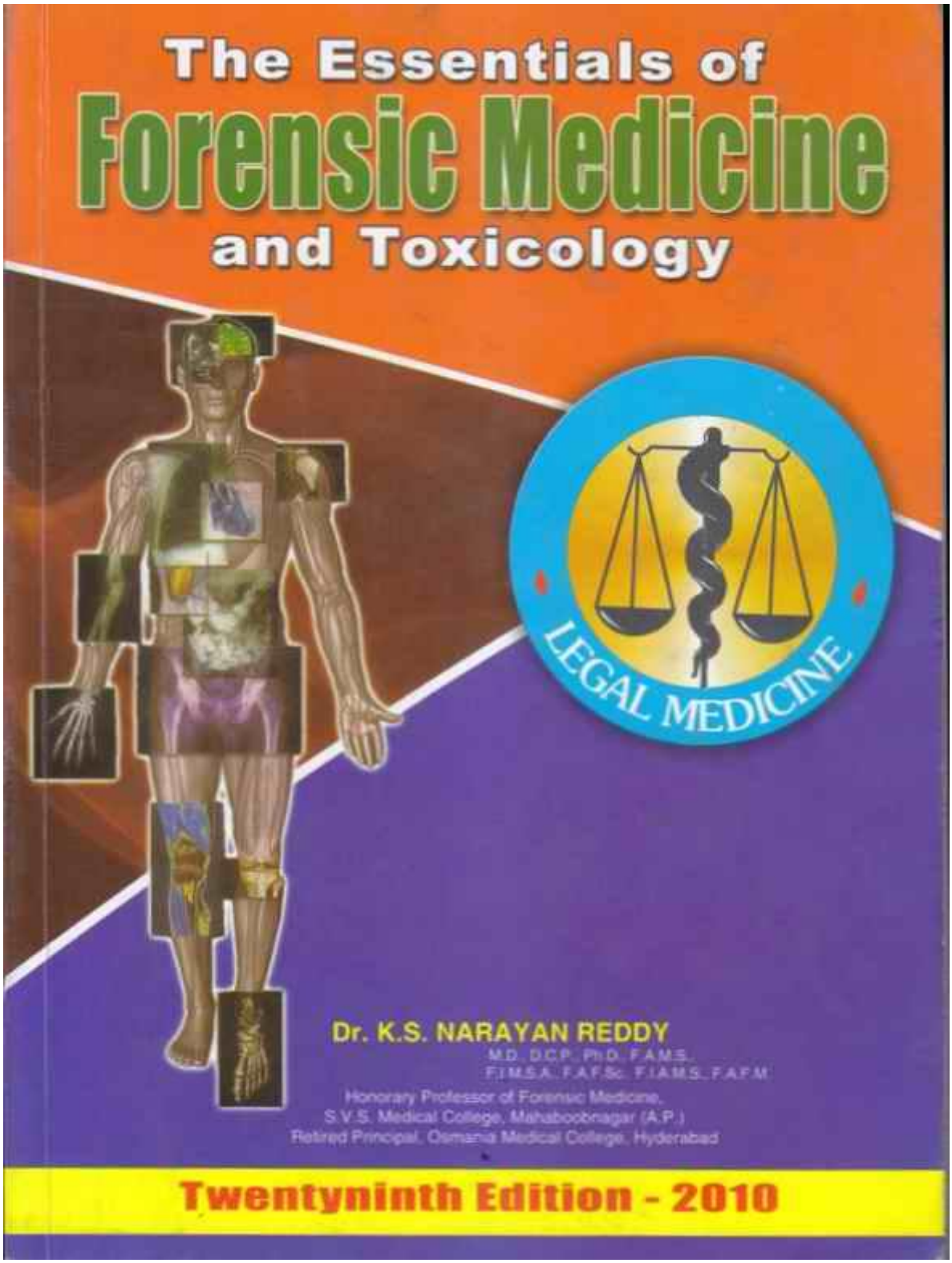
...A VERY USEFUL BOOK ...The book has stood the test of time and helped innumerable experts to rely on it till date and hopefully in the future too...

The Essentials of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, 29st Edition, by K S Narayan Reddy. Paper back, 9.5"x7".
K.Suguna Devi, H. No. 16-11-15/2/2, Saleemnagar Colony, No. 1. Malakpet, Hyderabad-500 036, 614 Pages. Publication date – 2010, Price: INR 320.00



"To be clear is the first duty of a writer; to charm and to please are graces to be acquired later."
-Brander Matthews

This text book of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology is written primarily to meet the needs of students of medical profession, medical officers, Practitioners, members of legal profession and other law enforcement officers. The very first edition of this book was brought out into the light of the day way back in 1973 and is updated to meet the continuous change and additions in this subject. Currently the book is in its twenty ninth edition which undoubtedly has been one of the popular standard reference text book covering the major spectrum of Forensic Medicine and

Toxicology subject in Indian subcontinent. I being a postgraduate student in Forensic Medicine consider myself an honour to write a review to this great treatise which I have been reading since my undergraduate years, for entrance preparations and now in post graduation.

View this book on Amazon

Being an eminent Professor of Forensic Medicine, Dr.K.S.Narayan Reddy has vast experience in his field. Dr.Reddy opines that though the physical pathology of trauma alter little over the years, but academic and practical approaches to the subject do evolve. Apart from this book, he has authored a wide range of books in MCQs, handbooks and manuals in the field of his expertise. He has numerous articles published and various national and international awards conferred upon him - to mention a few-Dr.B.C.Roy award (1986) ,Vijayashree award(1989) and rightfully honoured as " Man Of The Millennium in Forensic Medicine and Toxicology"(2001).

...The first chapter unveils with a brief introduction to various terminologies and excerpts of history of Forensic Medicine. Following that a brief outlook of legal procedures and ethics are mentioned which a doctor is expected to know and follow in his practice throughout his career. The author has unfolded his mastery with chapters like Medico legal autopsy, Mechanical injuries, Regional injuries -the pillar chapters which has held this book high as a scholarly work...

In this text book the chapters have been classified into two sections with Forensic Medicine proper- dealt in section 1 and toxicology part- in section 2. The first chapter unveils with a brief introduction to various terminologies and excerpts of history of Forensic Medicine. Following that a brief outlook of legal procedures and ethics are mentioned which a doctor is expected to know and follow in his practice throughout his career. The author has unfolded his mastery with chapters like Medico legal autopsy, Mechanical injuries, Regional injuries -the pillar chapters which has held this book high as a scholarly work. It helps the reader to grasp a full length of the subject and its practical aspect. For example details providing the mechanisms of injuries sustained in road traffic accidents are meritoriously explained in regional injuries. Also are explanations how pattern of injuries sustained by a pedestrian, a motorcyclist, a car occupant, and a driver are different in various circumstances possible in accidents. Topics which are found to discussed specially and make this book complete are of blood stains, abortions, anaesthetic deaths, artefacts and medico legal aspects of wounds which helps the reader to have an insight of these less-known but important topics, making the book different from others. Relevant tables (as table 8-1 to 8-7) are of immense use for quick glance of the extensive texts. Comprehensiveness in chapters like mechanical asphyxia and sexual offences are like icing to the cake. Medical examination of accused and medico legal questions is explained in detail, keeping the legal protocol in mind. However the figures given in the book are disappointing as they are not eye-catchy nor they are good representation of the accompanying text.

...It is essential to mention the author's efforts to input relevant technical information in chapters like forensic ballistics and clinical aspects in chapters of toxicology. In chapters dealing with toxicology apart from clinical aspect, a brief detail of each poisonous compound, its fatal dose, fatal time and the post-mortem appearance has been included...

It is essential to mention the author's efforts to input relevant technical information in chapters like forensic ballistics and clinical aspects in chapters of toxicology. In chapters dealing with toxicology apart from clinical aspect, a brief detail of each poisonous compound, its fatal dose, fatal time and the post-mortem appearance has been included. The appendix provided at the end of the book

includes glossary, proformas and formats for writing various certificates which are useful in day to day medico legal exercises. A detailed description for writing wound certificate has been mentioned in the chapter of medico legal aspect of wounds which many of the medical officers will find truly helpful.

Though the text format in the book is not reader-friendly and the grammatical errors sometimes causes confusion in understanding author's explanation, it can be emphasised here that this scholarly book is a "must-read" for all those who are interested in forensic medicine and need an authentic reference in medico legal issues. Forensic Medicine is mainly an empirical subject which needs common knowledge, basic skills and positive attitudes. The book has stood the test of time and helped innumerable experts to rely on it till date and hopefully in the future too.

-Karthik Krishna

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Karthik Krishna is a young aspiring postgraduate in Forensic Medicine at the prestigious All India Institue Of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. A black belt in martial arts (Budokan malaysia) and a Vedic scholar, he has craze for karate,loves reading books, swimming, research, and travelling. He has travelled through out India during his karate tournaments and various quiz competitions all over. He has also recieved ICMR grant during undergraduate days for short term student research works. Books are his best friends and he loves to socialise with bookworms like him. His parents are the greatest source of inspiration in all his endaveours. He admires his teachers and hopes to become an Expert in the field of Forensics. He can be contacted by email at karthis86@yahoo.com, and .



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