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. 13, NO. 2
Downloaded from www.anilaggrawal.com · ISSN 0972-8074 (Online) · https://www.anilaggrawal.com/ij/vol_013_no_002/reviews/tb/page004.html

Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

...EXCELLENT TRAINING MANUAL FOR YOUNG FORENSIC PATHOLOGISTS ...although primarily aimed at young pathologists, I learnt a great deal from it, despite being in the field for almost 4 decades. I would recommend this book for all forensic pathologists...

Essential Forensic Pathology: Core Studies and Exercises, 1st Edition, by Gilbert Edward Corrigan. Hardcover, 9.3" x 6.1" x 0.8". CRC Press LLC, 6000 Broken Sound Parkway NW, Suite 300, Boca Raton, FL 33487-2742. , . Publication Date Feb 14, 2012. 248 pages, ISBN-10: 1439876665; ISBN-13: 9781439876664 (alk. paper). Price: $99.95.

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This book is essentially aimed at trainee pathologists by pointing out in pointed bullets what they must know about the most common death scenes they will encounter. A vast range of different scenarios are discussed, ranging from gunshot wounds to asphyxiation to explosives to death from addiction.

The book has 42 chapters divided into 3 sections. It begins by discussing the coaching objectives in medical education and follows with a description of the 15 different rotations of the forensic pathology resident. Using a consistent and concise format, the book describes the facility where the rotation takes place, the necessary skills, the laboratory equipment, and other components of the rotation.

The main portion of the book – section 3 - presents forensic pathology essentials in the form of learning objectives—each delineated with a code: "M" represents “Memorized facts or concepts”. These are the items students must know. "S" represents a “Skill” – manual or physical. These are the items students must do.

Let us look at chapter 26 entitled “Trace Evidence and Criminalistics; Forensic Science”. A total of 28 objectives are given, some of which are marked M and other S. Some examples:

Describe and list the usual equipment used by crime scene personnel at a crime scene investigation – M

Attend five to ten homicide scenes and maker a report - S

As we go on, the book discusses the government’s role, describes medical examiner and coroner systems, and analyzes the academic discipline of forensic pathology. It focuses on hands-on elements of forensic pathology, with chapters on scene investigation, identification, and postmortem changes (signs of death). Objectives are also presented for various causes of death, including gunshot wounds, stab wounds, asphyxiation, sex-related death, and death from addiction. Additional chapters cover bombs and explosive devices, mental disease, epidemics, and issues related to forensic entomology.

Each chapter contains a list of pertinent vocabulary and references for further study. By mastering the objectives contained in each chapter of this manual, forensic pathology students will be ready to pass certification exams and work confidently in the field.

Although I began reading the book almost as a curiosity, thinking it would not be much useful for a properly trained person like me; yet I must confess I learnt a number of new points from the book. Although the book is primarily aimed at young and trainee forensic pathologists, even senior pathologist stand to gain a lot. I would imagine that it is a must buy for all forensic pathologists.

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Editor's recommendation. This book is recommended by the editor.