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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

Anil Aggrawal·Forensic Journal·Book Reviews

...AN EXCELLENT BOOK FOR FORENSIC PATHOLOGISTS ...This excellent book is an important addition to existing forensic literature. I would heartily recommend it not only to all forensic pathologits, but to all health professionals, who deal with infants and children..... Rating : 10/10...

Pearls and Pitfalls in Forensic Pathology: Infant and Child Death Investigation, 1st edition, by Darin P. Trelka and Peter M. Cummings. Hard Bound, 7.4" x 0.4" x 9.7"
Cambridge University Press, University Printing House, Cambridge, CB2 8BS, UK. Publication Date - December 20, 2016. 100 pages, ISBN-10: 1316601528; ISBN-13: 978-1316601525. Price: $109.30, £69.99

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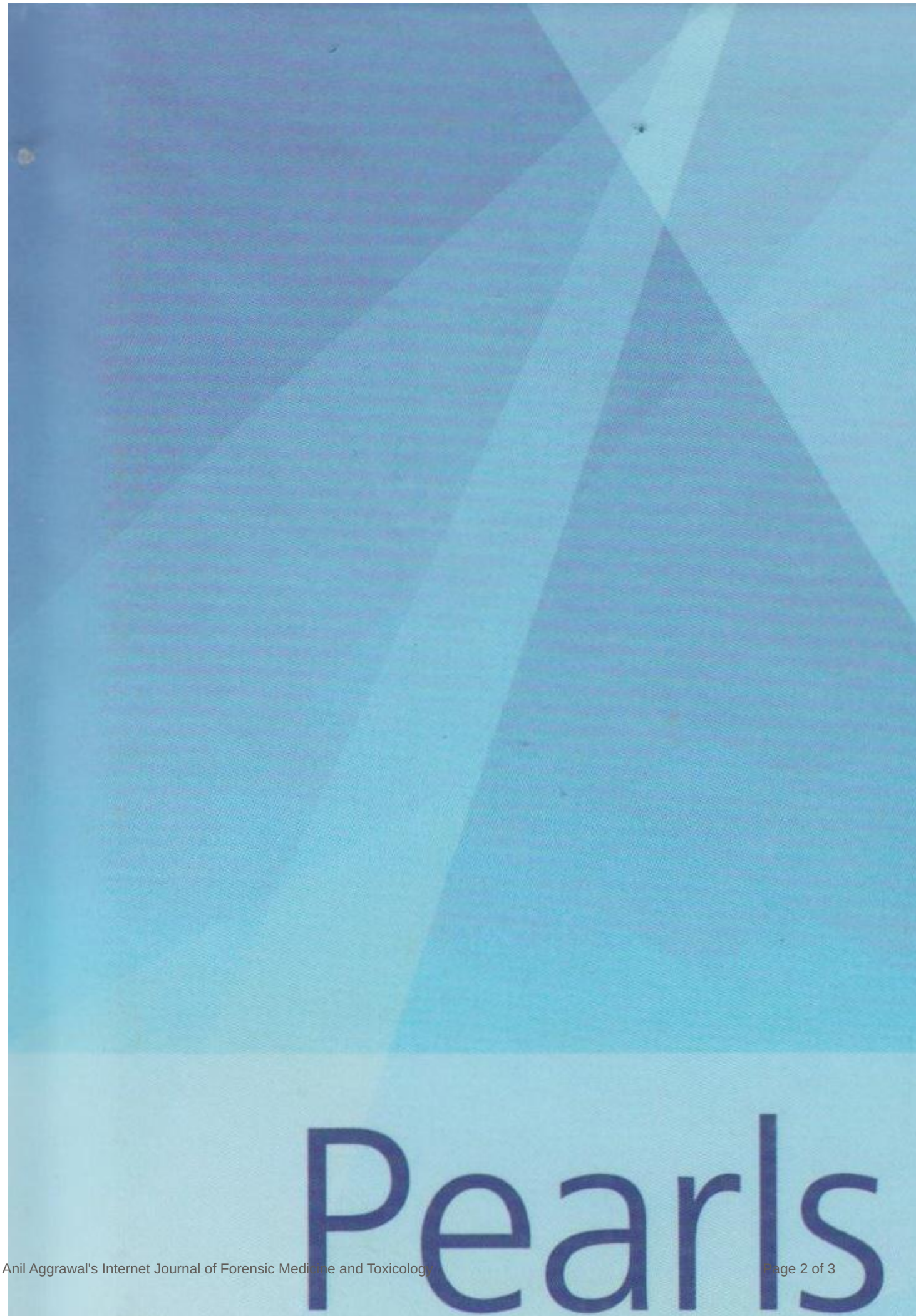
Pearls

Infant and child death investigation is quite different from other death investigations. Reasons are not difficult to find. Children often die of genetic and metabolic abnormalities and a host of other natural ailments which are not always easy to detect. Many cases of child abuse may mimic natural disease, and investigators may be thrown off-track, if they are not careful.

The book under review aims to give to the reader the pearls and pitfalls of such investigation. Pearls supposedly refers to a list of “musts” that the investigators must follow. Pitfalls on the other hand refer to the common mistakes that often occur in such investigations. The aims and objectives of this book are quite praiseworthy.

The book lists these pearls and pitfalls in 10 chapters. Chapter 1 gives the background and setting of death investigations. A primer of death investigation system is given which should be good for all beginners. A special section which caught my attention is “pivotal role of education of community”. The authors inform us that medical examiners and coroners must on a regular basis go out to the community and teach them the role that forensic science plays in everyone’s lives.

…All in all, a must for forensic pathologists. As for me, I would consult this book regularly to avoid pitfalls, as well as to learn about some valuable pearls in pediatric forensic pathology…

I found chapter 5 called “The death scene” quite informative. It gives a number of real case pictures and forms. Detailed information is given on scene visitation, on-scene behavior, examination of the body and most importantly reconstruction of infant death scene. The authors lay particular stress on a “scene doll reconstruction” where an infant-sized doll is used and the witnesses asked to place the doll in exact position, where the child was seen last alive, and when it was found dead.

Chapter 7 is also important. It deals with post-autopsy processes and procedures. A number of useful tips are given regarding how to preserve viscera and other evidences from the dead body.

Probably the best chapter is chapter 9 which gives several real case examples. Each case is illustrated with actual pictures.

All in all, a must for forensic pathologists. As for me, I would consult this book regularly to avoid pitfalls, as well as to learn about some valuable pearls in pediatric forensic pathology.

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