

## BOOK REVIEW

*Abraham Stolman,<sup>1</sup> Ph.D.*

### A Review of "Clinical Toxicology"

---

REFERENCE: Thienes, C. H. and Haley, T. J., *Clinical Toxicology*, Lea and Febiger, 5th ed., Philadelphia, 1972, 459 pages, \$6.50.

A book combining the clinical and laboratory aspects of drug overdose or poisoning is always a welcome addition to the scientific and medical literature. The author(s) abandoned the original tenet "a book to be readily useful should be small." The 5th edition follows the format of the previous ones, but it has been enlarged with much new material.

In the first part of the book, drugs or poisons which produce a characteristic or particular symptom make up the clinical diagnosis portion. Although the drugs and poisons described in this book are those which most frequently give rise to a certain type of distressing symptoms or pathologic conditions, it is obvious that many of the drugs will produce similar or identical symptoms. In most emergency cases it is likely to be of limited value.

There have been great advances in analytical methods and these have received their share of attention in the procedures detailed for the identification of drugs in the second part of the book. The analytical methods are well presented and supported by an appropriate number of well chosen illustrations. It is comforting and reassuring to find that more than one method is described for the identifications and confirmation of a particular drug or poison. This is a highly commendable feature.

One of the less notable features of the book is the large number of color tests, microcrystalline tests, and melting point determinations enumerated for the identification of drugs. These types of analytical procedures have a restricted usefulness due to the fact that most drugs are altered in the body, and the intact drug remaining usually cannot be isolated from the tissues and fluids with a degree of purity that would lend reliance to these types of identifying tests. Many drug metabolites or drug conjugates cannot be distinguished from the parent drug by simple chemical and physical tests. There is an increasing frequency of multiple drug usage and the reliability of these types of tests are again of questionable value when drug mixtures are encountered. This is an area where extreme caution is required, particularly for the beginner or the inexperienced.

It would have been advantageous to have the fate and excretion of the drugs discussed in the section on chemical diagnosis of poisoning instead of in the section on clinical

<sup>1</sup> State Department of Health, Laboratory Division, Hartford, Conn. 06101.

symptomology, since this information furnishes useful help on the most suitable samples to select for analysis or which metabolites may be encountered and isolated in addition to the unaltered drug.

The book is highly informative and is a valuable contribution to clinical toxicology. It could serve as a classroom text in clinical toxicology. I highly recommend this book to the student and the physician without reservation.

Estimation of Fluoroalkane Propellants in Postmortem Tissues—G. N. CHRISTOPOULOS AND E. R. KIRCH	168
Spermine and Choline Identification by Thin-Layer Chromatography—R. R. HALLCOCK	172
President-Elect of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences	175
<b>Book Reviews</b>	
A Review of <i>Forensic Odontology</i> (Gustafson)—E. V. COMULADA	177
A Review of <i>An Introduction to Criminalistics</i> (O'Hara and Osterburg)—J. T. MILLER	178
A Review of <i>Current Methods of Autopsy Practice</i> (Ludwig)—T. T. NOGUCHI	180
A Review of <i>Constitutional Rights of the Accused—Pretrial Rights</i> (Cook)—J. L. SACHS	181
A Review of <i>Clinical Toxicology</i> (Thienes and Haley)—ABRAHAM STOLMAN	182

## Announcement

The Allegheny County Coroner's Office wishes to announce the immediate availability of two Forensic Pathology Fellowships, each for a period of one year. A special LEAA Grant has been obtained through the Governor's Justice Commission of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to fund this training program.

The annual stipend for each Fellow in Forensic Pathology is \$16,000. Supplemental benefits include medical and hospitalization insurance, travel allowance for attendance at professional meetings, reference books, and several other items.

Applicants must be licensed physicians with a minimum of two years residency training in anatomic and/or clinical pathology.

The Allegheny County Coroner's Office is fully approved for a residency training program in forensic pathology by the American Board of Pathology and the American Medical Association. Completion of this twelve-month Fellowship would fulfill the requirements of the American Board of Pathology for Board-eligibility in forensic pathology.

The Allegheny County Coroner's Office has jurisdiction over Pittsburgh and all other municipalities in Allegheny County, with an aggregate population of more than 1.6 million. The Office has active teaching programs in forensic pathology, toxicology, psychiatry, odontology, and legal medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, and Public Health, and also at Duquesne University Schools of Law and Pharmacy. Fellows in Forensic Pathology would participate in these academic programs and would be eligible for faculty appointments.

The Fellowship training program will cover all aspects of medical-legal investigation and will afford the residents ample opportunity to work closely with various law enforcement agencies, criminal and civil attorneys, State and Federal courts, and various other governmental, educational, and private institutions and agencies. Special consideration will be given to individual research projects.

Interest applicants should write to: Cyril H. Wecht, M.D., J.D., Allegheny County Coroner's Office, 542 Fourth Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15219. Additional information may also be obtained by telephone (call collect) at: (412) 355-4460.

Erratum: Vol. 18, No. 3, July 1973, p. 277. The price of *Clinical Toxicology*, published by Lea and Febiger, was incorrectly listed as \$6.50. The price of the book is \$18.50. The review is reprinted on p. 182 of this issue.