

## BOOK REVIEW

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### A Review of "Medicolegal Investigation of Death"

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**REFERENCE:** Spitz, Werner U. and Fisher, Russell S., *Medicolegal Investigation of Death: Guidelines for the Application of Pathology to Crime Investigation*, Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1973, 560 pages, \$24.75.

*Medicolegal Investigation of Death* is the first new textbook concerning this subject to be published in the United States in 20 years. It is the authors' stated purpose to answer these needs by developing a text establishing guidelines for the application of pathology to crime investigation. The text is a fairly comprehensive volume covering a wide range of medicolegal problems confronting the criminal investigator, the attorney, and the novice forensic pathologist. It was also the purpose of the authors and 14 very capable contributors to introduce the complex subject of the pathology of trauma to a varied professional audience.

The subjects within the text cover almost all aspects of trauma and the differential diagnosis of sudden and/or unexpected death in natural disease. Some of these subjects have been treated more exhaustively than others. The book is not meant to be source material for the experienced forensic pathologist, as indicated in the authors' preface. The information is presented in a consolidated manner and is illustrated by the very descriptive photographs and diagrams. At times the volume is almost suggestive of an atlas, but this is not meant to be a criticism, for the photographs would be extremely useful to the experienced or inexperienced investigator.

The guidelines for the medicolegal investigator vary somewhat with author and subject but they are presented in a straightforward fashion. In some chapters the guidelines are so well organized that the investigator need only to follow them step by step for purposes of elimination or inclusion of data. The only criticism that might be levied is the lack of an in-depth coverage of the subject of toxicology, although the authors' stated purpose again is not to develop a comprehensive text on toxicologic deaths, but to present guidelines in the investigation of such.

The textbook is a welcome and valuable contribution to the literature of the forensic scientist, the attorney, and law enforcement personnel. It should also prove to be extremely useful to the pathologist who by chance or design becomes involved in medicolegal investigations. It is for these reasons that I would recommend it highly and without reservation.

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