

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of Lawyer's Guide to Forensic Medicine Handbook for Court & Chambers

REFERENCE: Knight, B., *Lawyer's Guide to Forensic Medicine Handbook for Court & Chambers*, William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd., Publisher, 23 Bedford Square, London WC1, England, 1982, 244 pages.

The author has designed this short volume as a rapid reference in forensic medicine based upon an alphabetical listing of the more common terms and topics in forensic pathology and forensic medicine that would appear or be used in criminal and civil litigation. It does not presume to be comprehensive or act as a resource for expert opinion. The volume would be most useful to the neophyte attorney without any background in the forensic science area beginning to prepare for the first medicolegal case. It does present fairly concise definitions with some description of the signs of that entity as well as brief discussion of the various diagnostic tests. Unfortunately, the brevity of these descriptions might have a tendency to lead the novice into erroneous thinking and case preparation. Some of the descriptions do not account for the multiple variations that may be observed in injury or in tests results. Some tests are still included that are rarely used today, for example, testing for diatoms. A secondary value of the volume is the line drawings with explanations that would well serve as the basis of similar or more complicated demonstrative exhibits useful as evidence. The volume still refers to toxic levels than the more preferred and precise terminology of toxic concentrations. The book is designed for British courts and so has limits in interpretive value in courts of other countries. The recommended reading list is also of limited value in that it is taken primarily from British publications.

This volume is recommended only as a possible primer for the absolute legal novice who must keep in mind that this is only a guide and a referral manual.

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