

## BOOK REVIEW

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### *A Review of Forensic Medicine: A Guide to Principles, 2nd Edition*

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**REFERENCE:** Gordon, I. and Shapiro, H. A., *Forensic Medicine: A Guide to Principles*, 2nd edition, Churchill Livingstone, Inc., 1560 Broadway, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10036, 1983, 451 pp., \$50.00.

This is the second edition of a text originally published in 1975. In the preface the authors state "A scientific evaluation of this discipline must discard the medico-legal mythology that still pervades much forensic thinking, writing and practice." With this concept in mind, portions of the text leave the impression that status thymicolymphaticus can be a legitimate cause of death, fat emboli may not be clinically significant, and instantaneous cadaveric rigidity can occur in some natural deaths.

The topic of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is poorly covered and is referenced under a discussion on suffocation. No references are specifically made to sexual asphyxias; however, one case detailed and illustrated is strongly suggestive of a sexual asphyxia but is explained only as an individual who had "practiced tying himself up in this unusual manner on several occasions."

Topics are presented unevenly. The entire topic of "Firearm Wounds" is covered in 14 pages while an illustrative case of arsenic poisoning is allocated 6 pages. Many of the references included after each chapter are from sources before 1960 with infrequent references cited since 1970. The black-and-white photographs are sometimes of marginal quality and occasionally seem poorly chosen to illustrate a specific point (for example, a head and torso view of a traumatized body to show a patterned injury of a boot heel near one breast).

The book is written for medical personnel and would not be suitable for someone not versed in medical terminology. With certain exceptions much of the information contained is accurate and most of the underlying principles of scientific investigation are appropriate. In my opinion, however, other texts currently on the market would better serve as a guide and reference point for the physician presented with cases of medico-legal significance.

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