

## BOOK REVIEW

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### A Review of *Clinical Toxicology*

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**REFERENCE:** Polson, C. J., Green, M. A., and Lee, M. R., *Clinical Toxicology*, 3rd ed., J. B. Lippincott Co., P.O. Box 1430, Philadelphia, PA 19105, 1983, 607 pp., \$47.50.

This is the third edition of Professors Polson's *Clinical Toxicology*. Many forensic toxicologists and pathologists are familiar with the first edition published in 1959, and coauthored by Dr. R. N. Tattersall. The second edition was published in 1969 and reprinted several times. Dr. Tattersall has since died, and Drs. Green and Lee, of the departments of forensic medicine and clinical pharmacology, respectively, have contributed to this edition. Forensic scientists not familiar with the earlier editions may find the title misleading and assume the book is concerned solely with the diagnosis and treatment of poisoning. Nothing could be further from the truth. In addition to symptoms and treatment, distribution and elimination, autopsy findings in fatal cases, and illustrative cases are often given.

The book consists of 32 chapters covering a variety of toxicants beginning with analgesic and anti-inflammatory agents and ending with poisonous and venomous marine life. In addition, there are chapters on the diagnosis and treatment of poisoning. The newer antidepressant, tranquilizer, and analgesic drugs have been added as new chapters or additions to previously established chapters.

Of great interest to me were the chapters on substances I seldom, if ever, encounter in fatal cases. The chapter on poisoning from corrosive substances was especially informative. So was the chapter on miscellaneous plant poisons.

Many toxicants are described in considerable detail, such as heavy metals, carbon monoxide, and cyanide. Those chapters provide a number of most interesting case histories taken, for the most part, from the files of various coroners in the area. The illustrative cases are detailed and often give concentrations of the toxicants found in accidental, suicidal, and homicidal poisonings. Unfortunately, not all drugs and chemicals are treated as well. For example, levallorphan is dismissed after several sentences and isopropanol poisoning is presented in a short paragraph. Chapter 10 on *Cannabis* was disappointing indeed with the most recent reference being 1976.

*Clinical Toxicology* is an excellent reference book and will be of considerable value to the forensic toxicologist, pathologist, and medical examiner.

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