

## BOOK REVIEW

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### *A Review of Practical Forensic Pathology*

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**REFERENCE:** Wetli, C. V., Mittleman, R. E., and Rao, V. J., *Practical Forensic Pathology*, Igaku-Shoin, Medical Pub., Inc., 1140 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036, 1988, \$35.00.

There are few forensic pathology books or manuals which one can enjoyably read cover to cover in one evening. The book *Practical Forensic Pathology* (138 pages) is worthy of the effort. This is a very readable book and should provide valuable information to pathologists who do occasional forensic autopsies. For full-time forensic pathologists, the book is highly recommended since it provides an opportunity for the experienced who are dulled by routine and repetition to compare current procedures with those recommended by the authors.

The authors recognized a significant need to provide information about common problems and concerns when they wrote this book. They begin with the rudiments of death certification and continue through general procedures for postmortem examination including helpful hints on the autopsy protocol. Additionally useful information regarding events after the autopsy is adequately provided including preparation for court. This information is very useable and is presented in a highly readable fashion. To the uninitiated, such information will be invaluable, particularly when faced with a "sensational" death investigation. Likewise, professionally wizened veterans should take heed since there is much wisdom in these pages.

Another noteworthy feature of the book is its survey of various injuries which are commonly encountered at autopsy. The discussion organizes an approach to these injuries and is very appropriate; again, helpful hints and comments are scattered throughout the text. I particularly liked the section concerning the examination performed on sexual assault victims. This discussion is not confined to the fatal sexual assault but also takes into consideration nonfatal sexual assaults which are performed in some communities by local pathologists. Likewise the processing of a bitemark is detailed enough to be useful without overburdening the text with technical detail of interpretation.

Considering that all are black and white, the quality of the photographs is quite acceptable for their purpose. Some photographs are washed out and could have been improved, but overall this is a minor criticism of the book.

I strongly recommend this book to all pathologists and further recommend that it be within reach both for bedside reading or on the bookshelf in the autopsy room.

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