

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of *Legal Medicine 1986*

REFERENCE: Wecht, Cyril H., Ed., *Legal Medicine 1986*, Praeger Publishers, 521 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10175, 256 pp.

Once again Dr. Wecht has presented the medical and legal professions with a useful and fascinating series of articles. This work contains a dozen well-written and informative reviews, each of which rightfully deserves separate consideration. However, because of necessary space constraints, this discussion will focus on selected chapters. This selection is dictated more by the personal interests and knowledge of the reviewer rather than by any variations in quality among the individual papers.

The 1986 edition of *Legal Medicine* leads off with a condensed overview of the epidemiology, etiology, and pathology of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). In addition, discussion is presented on the prevention, treatment, and legal issues raised by this syndrome. The synopsis is derived from a review of literature published from 1982 through 1984. Despite the limited time frame, this chapter can still be recommended as a good reference documenting the development of most of the major points of concern around this century's major infectious disease problem.

The lead article is followed by a well-written chapter submitted by Dr. Parikh discussing various aspects of the largest industrial disaster the world has yet seen, the gruesome tragedy at Bhopal, India, on 2 Dec. 1984. This article covers many of the factual, technical, engineering, and legal issues that describe the occurrence and aftermath of the holocaust. Dr. Parikh might be faulted for being a bit judgmental in his presentation, however, given the horrific nature of this incident, such reaction is understandable.

This volume is favored with a chapter which in itself makes *Legal Medicine 1986* a required text for all clinical and forensic toxicologists. Dr. Charles L. Winek has once again supplied the toxicology community with an invaluable database on drug and chemical blood levels. Blood concentrations are given for therapeutic, toxic, and lethal situations. This 1986 update of Dr. Winek's continuing efforts draws on data from improved analytical techniques which have refined the toxicologists' ability to determine blood concentrations and hence is particularly useful for its inclusion of new therapeutic agents. The article can also be recommended for any clinician or attorney faced with interpreting results from toxicology analysis.

Two other offerings in this volume should be of particular interest to attorneys specializing in biomedical technology. An excellent article by Dr. Sandy Sanbar gives an overview of current and developing technology in implantable medical devices. Artificial eyes, ears, and

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penises are discussed along with a well-considered treatment of cardiac assistance instruments.

In addition, Dr. Sanbar gives a good initial introduction to statutory and case law governing these high technology prostheses. This particular article is recommended as a good starting point for any attorney dealing with these ingenious artificial devices. In a separate chapter, Dr. Harry Rein presents a practical primer for attorneys on clinical thermography. The scientific basis, uses, and presentation in court of this unique medical procedure is presented in understandable terms. Many potentially helpful pointers and suggestions for the litigating attorney are offered by Dr. Rein.

Equally interesting and informative discussions on medical lasers, surrogate motherhood, obstetrical malpractice, angiography, hospital staff privileges, treatment of patients with terminal illnesses, and alternative health care delivery systems round out this text. Suffice it to say, the 1986 edition of Dr. Wecht's now classic series should be a part of the library of any physician or attorney interested in the forensic application of medicine and science.