

Preface

The practice of forensic pathology includes the collection and analysis of evidence in relation to a corpse in order to establish the cause of death. Knowledge of the cause of death contributes to the determination of the manner of death by medical examiners and coroners, who are occasionally assisted by law enforcement officers. In the process of establishing the cause and manner of death, representatives of various investigative bodies have several responsibilities, including explaining the death to family members, attempting to reduce the risk of similar deaths in the future, and, if applicable, apprehending the individuals who are responsible for the death.

The most well-known and popular role of a forensic pathologist is in the investigation of cases of suspicious death; however, most medicolegal autopsies involve unexpected deaths that are above suspicion, many of which are caused by trauma (trauma being defined as any physical force or agent that causes bodily harm). The purpose of *Forensic Pathology of Trauma: Common Problems for the Pathologist* is to provide practical advice and information about the conduct of the forensic autopsy in cases of trauma, and to offer guidance about the analysis of the autopsy findings in these cases. *Forensic Pathology of Trauma: Common Problems for the Pathologist* will help pathologists—particularly those more accustomed to “hospital” autopsies—avoid common mistakes in medicolegal cases by ensuring that they attend to the fundamental purposes of the forensic autopsy that, in addition to demonstrating the cause of death, addresses such issues as: “(1) the identity of the dead person; (2) the time of death; (3) the circumstances in which the fatal injury was sustained; (4) the type of weapon or agent that was responsible for the injury; (5) factors that may have predisposed the victim to injury, or modified the effects of injury...”(1).

Our approach is to describe common medicolegal “syndromes” or trauma patterns, which are exemplified by the chapter titles, and to provide comprehensive coverage of both the common and uncommon causes of these patterns. Although the book does not cover the autopsy investigation of suspicious death in detail, sufficient information is provided to ensure that a pathologist is aware of the pitfalls in such cases, and that these cases are dealt with appropriately when they do occur.

Forensic Pathology of Trauma: Common Problems for the Pathologist is primarily intended for the use of pathologists who perform forensic autopsies as part of a general autopsy service, as opposed to those employed in dedicated forensic autopsy centers; however, we believe the contents will also be of service to anyone who wants to understand the strengths and, more importantly, the limitations of the forensic autopsy.

Michael J. Shkrum, MD
David A. Ramsay, MB ChB

Reference

1. Moritz AR. Classical mistakes in forensic pathology. Am J Clin Pathol 26:1382–1397, 1956.



<http://www.springer.com/978-1-58829-458-6>

Forensic Pathology of Trauma

Shkrum, M.J.; Ramsay, D.A.

2007, XIII, 646 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-58829-458-6

A product of Humana Press