

Preface to the Third Edition

Clinical Forensic Medicine has still not received the full recognition of speciality status but there have been exciting developments since the publication of the second edition of this textbook. The Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine has been established by the Royal College of Physicians of London with the laudable aim of promoting for the public benefit the practice of Forensic and Legal Medicine. The European Council of Legal Medicine has been working to create a speciality of Legal Medicine and the Australasian Association of Forensic Physicians has been established with the aim of seeking formal recognition of Clinical Forensic Medicine as a medical speciality.

Increasingly, other health care professionals (HCP) are involved in many aspects of clinical care previously provided by doctors. Nurses and paramedics are providing general forensic services (custody care) and nurses are performing sexual offence examinations. It is essential that the person providing care to this incredibly vulnerable group of patients (detainees or complainants) has the appropriate knowledge and skills. More than ever, a death in custody or a death following police contact, is intensely scrutinised.

I hope that the third edition will assist all health care professionals in their role in custody and with complainants. All the chapters in this edition have been reviewed and revised. In particular, the chapter on non-accidental injury has had a major rewrite reflecting the recent developments in child protection/safeguarding. There is now a specific chapter on the TASER with other aspects of restraint dealt with separately. Similarly, the Care of Detainees and Fitness for Interview chapters have been separated to allow a more comprehensive discussion of the issues. Some new authors have joined the team of contributors providing a more international perspective. Thanks are due to all contributors for their diligent work.

It is essential that each HCP working in a multidisciplinary team is fully aware of their individual roles and responsibilities and works within his/her field of competence as only then will multidisciplinary team working be effective. I hope that this edition will assist forensic physicians, nurses, and paramedics in providing independent, authoritative, and competent care to detainees and complainants.

Margaret M. Stark



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Stark, M.M. (Ed.)

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