

Treatise on Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences – Volume III: Forensic Pathology and Biology

Editorial Bosch, S.A., ISBN: 978-84-9790-6, coordinated by Santiago Delgado Bueno, Fernando Bandrés Moya and Joaquin Lucena Romero

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There are few books on legal medicine and forensic sciences, published in Spanish, that are both complete and exhaustive: complete in that they incorporate the multiple facets of this area of knowledge; and exhaustive in that they cover all those facets in a manner that is specific, detailed, in depth, and conducted with great scientific rigour. The publication of the *Treatise on Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences* by Editorial Bosch, S.A. fulfils this need. The work comprises five extensive volumes, the first of which on Sanitary Law, the second on Forensic Toxicology, Drug Abuse and Body Damage/ Brain Damage, the third on Forensic Pathology, Criminalistics and Forensic Biology, the fourth on Reproductive Legal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Legal and Forensic Pediatrics as well as Violence/Victimology, and finally the fifth on Legal and Forensic Psychiatry.

In order to write the 60 chapters of the third volume, the coordinators selected a group of 81 outstanding authors, both Spanish and Latin American, all of them dedi-

cated, in one way or another, to university tuition and to practice as experts.

In the chapters on Forensic Pathology, we find the classical themes on this subject, amply revised and up-to-date, which allow us to encounter newly arisen matters such as the medical aspects of AIDS, injuries due to Taser® electric weapons or the principles of biosecurity in forensic autopsies, to mention just a few. In the chapter on Criminalistics and Forensic Biology, this feature is accentuated every time special attention is given to the newest molecular biology where the analytical techniques of DNA and their expert interpretation are introduced in the classical themes of Criminalistics and Forensic Biology. The most recent example in this subject is found in the chapter that deals with DNA databases used for criminal investigations and towards the identification of missing persons.

The approach to Forensic Pathology assumes in this *Treatise* an unquestionable social and humanitarian aspect. Beyond the two chapters dedicated to the forensic medical activity in dealing with disasters, we find two chapters covering the medico-legal evaluation of torture – one on the judicial aspects of human trafficking, another on the judicial-penal repercussion on hunger strike and also another on the medical forensic in-

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vestigation of deaths in custody. With reference to torture, the Istanbul and Minnesota protocols are defined and explained not only towards the forensic investigation of torture, leading the reader to sites in internet about the subject, but also towards the objectives of forensic investigation in deaths due to violation of human rights. The forensic autopsy protocol model proposed by the authors in this chapter is excellent, and should constitute compulsory reading for all those forensic pathologists who deal with cases of this type.

References to the relative legislation in each subject covered are made throughout the work, thus converting it into an extremely useful tool, not only for forensic medical experts, but also jurists, judges and magistrates. Moreover, the authors of the different chapters interpolate quotations from the Spanish legislation with those from the international legislation, thus covering a wide scope of diffusion.

In the presentation of the subjects relating to Forensic Pathology a great number of photographs are added that illustrate the text with practical cases. But the images are in black and white and thus make the interpretation a bit difficult. Digital support attached to this work may overcome this inconvenience, allowing the reader to see the images in colour. Finally, the bibliography presented in the final pages of this volume is abundant and up-to-date, so the scientific standards are thus guaranteed.

Even though numerous authors write the book, the standard is maintained throughout the 1,279 pages thanks to a skilled coordination. In conclusion, as the author of the prologue states, this is “as from now, an indispensable book towards the study of Forensic Medicine.”