Basil RuDusky: Forensic cardiovascular medicine

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Forensic Cardiovascular Medicine is a monograph which comprises a concise survey of important cardiovascular conditions that present as acute illnesses and often with circumstances of potential medicolegal significance. Dr. Basil RuDusky is the sole author of this work which is based on his experience and expertise in clinical and forensic cardiovascular medicine. The monograph is close to 200 pages and is divided into Seven Sections, three Appendices, a list of 202 References, cited in the text, a short Bibliography of additional journal articles, and an Index. Appendix C provides a short list of recommended textbooks.

The content of the text reflects the author's interests in clinical presentations of a variety of cardiovascular conditions, correlation with pathological findings and medicolegal considerations. The Sections include 18 chapters and deal with the following topics: overview of forensic medicine; cardiac trauma; vascular abnormalities; specific cardiopathic disorders; toxic and physical influences; technical, epidemiological, social and philosophical influences; and illustrative case reports. Given the succinct nature of the text, certain complex topics, particularly sudden cardiac death due to coronary artery disease, warrant a more in-depth consideration than provided here. Nevertheless, the text is judged to be scientifically accurate and quite current, reflecting Dr. RuDusky's active practice in forensic medicine. The topic chapters do not include illustrations but they are accompanied by many well-designed and informative Tables.

An innovative aspect of the book is Section VII which presents 25 interesting and informative cases, each of which has a case report and comments on forensic and litigious implications of the case. Several of the cases are accompanied by characteristic electrocardiograms. These cases drive home many aspects of the issues discussed in the preceding chapters.

Dr. RuDusky has a particular interest in blunt cardiac trauma. Appendix A presents, "The RuDusky Classification—The World's First Complete Classification of Myocardial Contusion and Blunt Cardiac Trauma." The title is a bit grandiose but the content is practical and useful. Appendix B presents a compilation of the potential short-term and long-term cardiovascular complications of adjuvant systemic therapy for breast cancer and other malignancies, which is timely because these complications are becoming increasingly prevalent and recognized.

A major theme emphasized through the monograph is captured by the following quote:

"Aortic dissection is one of six diagnoses for which attending and consulting physicians must be constantly vigilant—acute myocardial infarction, pulmonary embolism, aortic dissection, pericardial tamponade, acute mesenteric ischemia, and heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT). All six can be easily overlooked or misdiagnosed and can result in significant medical-legal consequences".

I recommend this book as a very practical guide to forensic cardiovascular medicine that will fill a useful niche in the personal library of members of the forensic medical community.

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