



■ **'Pathology of Trauma'** K. Mason (1999) ISBN 0340691891 £155
[Arnold Publishers](#)

The 3rd edition of this mammoth reference text in forensic pathology is edited by Prof. Mason and Dr. Purdue, both of the University of Edinburgh, and draws not only on their extensive experience, but that of 40 other contributors.

Each Chapter is written in the unique style of the contributing author - internationally respected academic or practitioners in the fields of trauma, pathology or toxicology - and yet blends in with the overall style of the text.

Although one is immediately struck by the authoritative nature of the contents of this book, with each Chapter containing its own extensive literature review, it still remains eminently accessible to the non-practitioner/ student. Indeed, I used the book and its references extensively when researching an essay on 'The Forensic Implications of Cocaine' for a Special Study Module in Forensic Medicine, and was particularly impressed with the contents of Dr. Karch's Chapter on 'Drug Abuse and Trauma'.

The contents are well set out, and easy to read, and the illustrations are crystal clear.

For those of us who are just starting to learn about the subject of trauma, the Chapters on the 'Examination and interpretation of rifled firearm injuries', 'Smooth-bore firearm injuries', 'Cutting and piercing wounds' and 'The examination of the adult victim of assault' are perhaps the most instructive, and I have not come across such clear descriptions and illustrations of basic wound types and patterns in any of the other standard texts that I have reviewed thus far. This book should certainly be recommended reading for all those undertaking their clinical rotations in trauma medicine.

Injuries seen in cases of suspected child abuse are also well described and would be of interest to students of paediatrics, as well as those who have started their specialist training in that subject, and even those well advanced along their specialist training. Indeed, a recent case that attracted significant media attention involved a child that died from her injuries at the hands of her abusive relative, despite a junior doctor suspecting abuse during one of her many visits to casualty. That doctor was over-ruled by the Consultant, who diagnosed a dermatological problem rather than cigarette burns.

Disaster pathology is extremely well covered by Prof Mason, with the Mount Erebus, Lockerbie and Air India disasters used as case studies.

A sensitive area of forensic medicine - that of 'Deaths in Custody' - is summarised brilliantly by Prof Vanezis, and would be of interest to forensic physicians, as well as pathologists.

This current edition of 'The Pathology of Trauma' certainly surpasses previous editions - all of which are in my college medical library, and I believe that the 3rd edition will set the standard for new reference texts in forensic pathology.

Weighing in at 516 pages, one certainly gets value for money, and it saddens me that with the demise of formal didactic teaching in forensic medicine at most medical schools in the UK, students will have no incentive to buy this wonderful book. However, it should take pride of place on the library shelf, and I would urge students to pester their college librarians to purchase a copy, if they have not already done so.

Students of forensic science will also find this book of immense value, and I would be surprised if it were not already on their reading lists.

When I start my training in pathology, and particularly my specialist forensic pathology training in a few years time, 'The Pathology of Trauma' will surely be my most prized possession - congratulations to Prof Mason and Dr. Purdue on a splendid job, and to Arnold for commissioning this current edition - I look forward to seeing the next edition in due course!