

Book review:

M. T. Sheaff, D. J. Hopster: Post mortem technique handbook.

Springer, New York, Berlin, 2001, 89 US\$, ISBN: 1-85233-132-1

To write a post mortem technique handbook is of somewhat contradictory value in our times: the decline of autopsy frequencies in the Western states includes a loss of knowledge in performance and interpretation of autopsies and enforces the documentation of own experiences. On the other hand, the demand for such information is probably low, and our young colleagues are basically more interested in the latest molecular biological research than to read about autopsy techniques and interpretation. The authors took into account several modern aspects of autopsy preparation and interpretation which include “background” aspects such as highly infectious diseases, occupation or electronic documentation. The textbook itself describes the advantages and disadvantages of different autopsy techniques such as “en bloc removal” or Virchow’s method. Each organ is specifically analyzed. The basic performance is described in detail, and, in addition, disease-related technical methods are discussed. The textbook includes several black and white images which well document the problem under discussion. The list of references is small, however, it includes all important related books and articles. The textbook should be available in each institute of pathology which is still performing autopsies, especially when young colleagues are to be trained in this technique.

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