

BOOK REVIEW

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Forensische Zahnmedizin

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The title of this book, Forensische Zahnmedizin means Forensic Odontology, but it is more than just that, containing in addition an extensive coverage of dental law which in its broadest sense traverses well into the medical and legal fields.

It is divided into two major parts: dental law and forensic odontology. In part one aspects of dental law cover all important topics in the field of medical and dental law. For example there is a rich documentation of literature and court proceedings and sentences, an overview of the legal principles imperative in the dentist/patient relationship (dental contract, informed consent, duty-of-care, liability, continuing education, confidentiality, duty to keep dental records), the relationship with the dental technician and medication law. A fact of dental practice is that treatments do fail and accidents happen and increasingly dentists are being brought before the courts, charged with malpractice. This book focuses on all aspects of possible malpractice including the particularly vulnerable fields of oral surgery and prosthodontics. Also dealt with in detail are the role and duties of the dental expert involved in malpractice trials.

The second part of the book is devoted to forensic odontology and starts with tooth development, the different systems of tooth numbering, dental charts and the Interpol forms for mass disaster DVI. The chapter on dental age estimation covers the topic very thoroughly and the following chapter deals with dental identification (describing such notable cases as those of Eva Braun, Martin Bormann and Adolf Hitler), gender differences, denture marking and related technical procedures. Chapter 2H covers bitemarks and gives a very good overview of all the different methods of investigation and how to handle the pieces of evidence, and the last chapter deals with lip prints.

This book is written in cooperation with Rolf Singer, Günter Seifert, Tore Solheim, Wolfgang Pilz and Dieter Leopold and this depth of expertise makes it a very valuable book that is highly recommended reading for every forensic odontologist. It is written for dentists, students, practitioners in the field of forensic sciences, lawyers, criminalists and insurance companies. The only disadvantage is that the book is written in German, but it could well be translated into English which would deservedly make it available to a much broader public. Beautifully bound and presented, it contains 110 illustrations and 45 tables and it can take pride of place in any personal or public library.