

Geriatric Forensic Medicine and Pathology

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Edited by Kim A. Collins , Roger W. Byard
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Geriatric Forensic Medicine and Pathology

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To the “Four Sisters”: My Mother, Mary Ann Hawkins Collins, Aunt Lydia Hawkins Watson, Aunt Jane Hawkins Walker, and Aunt Kris Cross Hawkins. The women who have taught me how to explore with bravery, follow curiosity, lose myself in a book, embrace the unknown, and laugh at myself. Four women who will forever have part of my heart.

KAC

Dedicated to the memory of my parents, Bill (1925–2012) and Mary (1927–2014) – two of the loveliest people I have ever had the privilege of meeting.

RWB

The wisdom and experience of older people is a resource of inestimable worth. Recognizing and treasuring the contribution of older people is essential to the long-term flourishing of any society.

Daisaku Ikeda Japan 1928

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Preface

Despite our aging population, there are very few texts which deal with forensic issues in the elders, those individuals aged 60 years and older. However, the increasing number of elders is something very pertinent to all societies, and so this is an extremely topical subject. This text provides an up-to-date review of all facets of the forensic evaluation of the elderly with contributions from experts across several disciplines. Chapters cover inflicted, self-inflicted, and accidental trauma, as well as the variable manifestations of natural conditions resulting in unexpected pathology and/or death in old age. The pathological diagnosis of these conditions is discussed with color illustrations and approaches to particular cases in clinical scenarios and at autopsy. In addition to these standard chapters, other chapters cover a wide range of topics including elder maltreatment, abuse, dementias, pharmacology/toxicology issues, nutrition, long-term care facilities, scene investigation examination, autopsy photography, and

expert evidence. Issues such as euthanasia and the legal implications of aging are also explored to provide a rich texture for the understanding of problems that may occur with aging. There are overlaps of information between chapters, as expected; however, this merely reflects the complexity of conditions in the elderly, which do not always fit conveniently into particular isolated medical categories.

The editors hope that this text will provide a focus and important resource for all medical examiners, medicolegal death investigators, law enforcement officers, lawyers, forensic pathologists, trainees, forensic physicians, geriatricians, nursing staff, and allied services who deal with issues that arise with elders in our society. Recognizing that these individuals deserve the respect and support of our society with appropriate medical investigations and diagnostic processes both before and after death is clear, but we just have to ensure that this happens.

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