BOOK REVIEW

A. J. McBay, Ph.D.

A Review of Poison Detection in Human Organs


This is the third edition of an excellent textbook on analytical toxicology. Those of us who have used the first edition (1963), 150 pages, and the second edition (1969), 280 pages, will be pleased with this enlarged and revised edition. About half the book is devoted to general toxicological information including emergency hospital toxicology, drug abuse screening, and analysis of blood, urine, liver, gastric content, brain, and kidney. The last half of the book is devoted to monographs on the analysis of specific substances. There are over 500 references; most are very recent. Of particular value are the interpretations of results.

Two approaches are considered in the text; the first is the analysis of the "general unknown" and the second is the direct analysis of specific substances. The general principles of extraction and chemical separation are adequately covered. There does not appear to be any information on "heroin-related" deaths and the toxicology associated with them. This reviewer is particularly sensitive to methods for determining propoxyphene and norpropoxyphene and would prefer that the amount of parent drug be determined. In deaths the blood should contain at least 0.1 mg/100 ml of the unmetabolized drug, propoxyphene.


This book is highly recommended to anyone who must analyze for poisons. This would be my choice if I were allowed only one book on poison detection.

1Chief toxicologist, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, and professor of pathology and pharmacy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.