



THE COLLEGES OF MEDICINE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Incorporated Association not for gain
Reg No 1955/000003/08

Examination for the Diploma in Forensic Medicine of the
College of Forensic Pathologists of South Africa - Pathology

15 February 2021



Paper 1

(3 hours)

All questions are to be answered. Each question must be answered in a separate answer booklet (or booklets if more than one booklet is required for the one answer).

- 1 A 25-year-old man is combative and aggressive when police arrive at a house from which neighbours heard screaming and breaking of glass for the past hour. He suddenly collapses after a scuffle. He is resuscitated in an ambulance and his vital signs show a temperature of 40 °C, respiration 36/min, heart rate 120 beats / min and blood pressure 175/90 mmHg. His pupils are dilated. He dies within an hour. A medicolegal autopsy reveals no signs of major trauma.
- a) What are the possible mechanisms- and causes of death in this case? (12)
 - b) Describe what other tests or special investigations you may do at autopsy and what results you expect to find. (10)
 - c) The family calls for the autopsy results. How would you manage the request? (3)
- [25]
- 2 Write short notes on the following.
- a) The macerated foetus. (6)
 - b) So-called "date rape" drugs. (9)
- [15]
- 3 Tabulate the essential differences between the following.
- a) Ante-mortem thrombi and post-mortem blood clots. (5)
 - b) Subdural and epidural hematomas. (5)
 - c) Lacerations and incised wounds. (5)
- [15]
- 4
- a) Tabulate the differences between gunshot entry and exit wounds. (10)
 - b) What is the difference (if any) between primer residue and firearm discharge residue? (5)
- [15]
- 5
- a) A detainee is found dead in a cell at a police station. Describe how you would determine the time of death if requested to do so. (10)
 - b) Write short notes on post-mortem saponification (adipocere). (5)
- [15]
- 6
- a) Write short notes on contrecoup brain contusions. (5)
 - b) List and briefly describe the different types of brain herniation. (10)
- [15]



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16 February 2021



Paper 2

(3 hours)

All questions are to be answered. Each question must be answered in a separate answer booklet (or booklets if more than one booklet is required for the one answer).

- 1 Discuss the types of injuries, together with their possible mechanisms of causation, which may be found during a medicolegal post-mortem examination of a fatal vehicular pedestrian accident. [25]
- 2 Write short notes on the following.
 - a) Fallacies of the hydrostatic test. (5)
 - b) "Necklacing" fatalities. (5)
 - c) The role of forensic dentistry. (5)
 [15]
- 3 Write short notes on.
 - a) The definition of unnatural deaths in current South African legislation. (7)
 - b) The differences between the cause, mechanism, manner and circumstances of death. (8)
 [15]
- 4
 - a) What elements at a scene of death would lead you to believe that you may be dealing with a scenario of auto-erotic asphyxia? (10)
 - b) What is meant with the term "defence wounds" and where are those usually located on the body? (5)
 [15]
- 5
 - a) For what reasons could you be called upon by the SAPS to attend a scene of death? (3)
 - b) Who should be in attendance at a crime scene where someone has died? (3)
 - c) Briefly describe attending a death scene of a suspected murder-suicide and what tests or investigations you would perform. (9)
 [15]
- 6
 - a) Briefly describe the expected appearance of a hard contact gunshot wound of the head caused by a handgun. (5)
 - b) Write short notes on the causes and pathology of hypoxic/ischaemic brain damage. (10)
 [15]