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&
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The importance of the autopsy in lethal cases of medical malpractice

Medical malpractice is defined as any act or omission by a physician during treatment of a patient that deviates from accepted norms of practice in the medical community and causes an injury to the patient. Forensic medicine today is a large medical field that includes many subareas including the investigation of medical malpractice. Autopsy, a surgical procedure performed on a recently deceased patient is the last and most complete diagnostic procedure. Carefully performed by a thoughtful, interested and experienced physician, it should reveal much of the truth about the health of the deceased patient and the mechanism of death. The medical malpractice is today a central item for the forensic pathology and the lethal medical malpractice is a specific subgroup of a wider phenomenon and a rising, central topic for the forensic pathologist. Forensic autopsies are a mandatory step in the judicial evaluation of the suspected medical malpractice. The forensic investigation on lethal medical malpractice cases must determine the cause of the patient's death must analyze all the actions of the involved clinicians and must eventually state a causal relationship between the patient's death and the identified malpractice. The great value of autopsies for verifying medical malpractice becomes evident by several studies. Based just on the autopsy findings the forensic pathologist is often able to rule out medical negligence.

Biography

Grigorios Leon is the President of Hellenic Society of Forensic Medicine and is a Representative (Deputy) of Greece in the European Council of Legal Medicine. He is on the lists of experts in the County Courts of Law (Athens, Piraeus, etc.). He is a Graduate (MD) of the Medical School of the University of Rome "La Sapienza", where he obtained two Master degrees (MSc). In 2009, he received his PhD from the Medical School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. His research interests are in the areas of forensic pathology, medical deontology and bioethics.

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