

## Forensic Pathology: Examine the Cause of Death

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Forensic pathology is pathology that focuses on determining the cause of death by examining a corpse. A post mortem is performed by a medical examiner, usually during the investigation of criminal law cases and civil law cases in some jurisdictions

Terminology is not consistent across jurisdictions:

In some jurisdictions, the title of "Medical Examiner" is used by a non-physician, elected official involved in medicolegal death investigation. In others, the law requires the medical examiner to be a physician, pathologist, or forensic pathologist.

Canadian coroners:

In Canada, there was a mix of coroner and medical examiner systems, depending on the province or territory. In Ontario, coroners are licensed physicians, usually but not exclusively family physicians. In Quebec, there is a mix of medical and non-medical coroners, whereas in British Columbia, there is predominantly a non-physician coroner system. Alberta and Nova Scotia are examples of ME systems[

Coroners and medical examiners in the United States:

In the United States, a coroner is typically an elected public official in a particular geographic jurisdiction who investigates and certifies deaths. The vast majority of coroners lack a Doctor of Medicine degree and the amount of medical training that they have received is highly variable, depending on their profession (e.g. law enforcement, judges, funeral directors, emergency medical technicians, nurses)

Forensic medicine mainly deals with examination and assessment of individuals who have been—or are suspected to have been—injured or killed by external influence such as trauma or intoxication, but also of individuals who are suspected of having injured another person. This means that not only victims and suspects of crime, but also suicidees and accidental fatalities are examined by a specialist in forensic medicine (or forensic pathology). Individuals with nonfatal injuries after intentionally self-inflicted or accidental injuries or intoxication are, on the other hand, usually handled exclusively within the health-care system.

Forensic pathology is the part of forensic medicine dealing with examination of deceased persons, and this is the focus of the present chapter. In the following, some general principles of the work in forensic pathology are presented. Although the legislation regarding forensic pathology differs between countries, a common principle is that in the investigation of a possible or suspected criminal death, a forensic pathologist is engaged through a formal request from the police or the prosecutor. The task of the forensic pathologist is then to assist in the investigation as a medical expert. This expert role continues throughout the process, including the court proceedings on request of the court and/or one of the parties.

The task is to function as a medical expert for justice, not primarily to support one of the parties in the trial. Hence, the role of the forensic pathologist in the relation to the examined person is obviously completely different from the role of the clinical doctor in his/her relation to the patient, where the physician often becomes an advocate for the patient. The main role of the forensic pathologist is to practise and to mediate a scientific approach to the medical issues raised in a legal context involving death. It is inherent in its very nature that the forensic pathologist, irrespective of principle, strives to assist with impartial assessments, based on "science and tried and tested experience."

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