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## Fraenkel: Lawyer's Medical Cyclopeda of Personal Injuries and Allied Specialties

C. W. Muehlberger Ph.D.  
*University of Michigan Medical School*

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## RECENT BOOKS

LAWYERS' MEDICAL CYCLOPEDIA OF PERSONAL INJURIES AND ALLIED SPECIALTIES. Edited by *Charles J. Fraenkel*, M.D., and others. Seven volumes including General Index and Glossary. Indianapolis: Allen Smith Co. 1958-1962. \$210.00.

Probably the most serious difficulty confronting an attorney who is called upon either to press or defend a claim for personal injury lies in the proper evaluation of the medical facts upon which such claim is based. The problem stems largely from the inability or unwillingness of physicians to explain their opinion of the medical situation in precise language. With all the uncertainties and variable factors which might influence the severity of an injury, the duration of recovery and residual disability, the doctor's unwillingness to pinpoint the future course of a patient's progress following an injury is understandable. But even apart from his unwillingness to be "put on the spot," so to speak, concerning a patient's probable course of recovery, physicians find it difficult to talk in terms of basic English which would be understandable alike to juries, courts and attorneys. The particular work under review attempts to minimize or eliminate this tendency on the part of medical men.

An additional cause for concern among attorneys who find themselves confronted with medico-legal problems lies in the wide variability of evaluations which may result from the presentation of the same series of facts to a number of presumably competent medical practitioners. In attempting to obtain a reasonable consensus in such situations, the editorial board of this cyclopedia have invited a number of widely experienced specialists to discuss those particular phases of medico-legal problems which most closely fit into their background of training and practice. About two-thirds of the contributors of special chapters are medical practitioners, while one-third are attorneys or specialists in fields ancillary to the practice of medicine.

Obviously such a large series of chapters by different authors would present a very sketchy and uneven hodgepodge of material were it not for careful editing and coordinating by the editorial board. The evenly-balanced presentation which one finds in this work is due in large part to their excellent editorial efforts. Because of the importance of their service in creating a well-balanced series, they deserve special mention. Chief of the editorial board is Dr. Charles J. Fraenkel, an internationally-renowned orthopedic surgeon and also an attorney and lecturer in medical law at the University of Virginia Law School. Assisting him were the late J. W. Holloway, Jr., who, for years prior to his retirement, had been in charge of the American Medical Association's Bureau of Legal Medicine, Dr. Paul McMaster who, like Dr. Fraenkel, is a noted orthopedic surgeon with wide experience in handling injury cases of traumatic origin, and Professor Kenneth R. Redden, University of Virginia Law School. Although there

may be a few points of overlapping of material in the several chapters, this editorial board has done a superb job in securing complete coverage of the field in language which is clear and understandable.

Each of the individual chapters is authored by specialists in that particular field, mostly by physicians, but occasionally a specially qualified attorney has summarized the legal angles which bear upon the particular subject under discussion. At frequent intervals throughout the series, lengthy and reasonably exhaustive sample transcripts of medical testimony are appended, indicating the nature and scope of both direct and cross-examination of expert witnesses. At the end of each chapter is a bibliography of specialized books and journal articles bearing upon medical and legal aspects of the subject, including A.L.R. summaries of court decisions. Each individual volume is provided with its own index and a glossary of the medical terms employed; consequently, attorneys need not keep a medical dictionary at their elbow in order to understand the medical discussions. Volume seven of the series contains a complete index of all the material covered in the first six volumes, and also a complete glossary of medical terms. A brief discussion of anatomy and physiology of the normal human body (70 pages) is also included. It is proposed that an annual addendum be published and supplied with loose-leaf service so as to keep the work up to date.

The individual chapters are well illustrated so that a non-medical reader may quickly grasp the significance of any malfunction. Some of these, such as the description of the musculo-skeletal system (Vol. 1, section 4), are truly works of art.

While it would serve no useful purpose to present a detailed listing of the subject of all forty-six chapters of this cyclopedia, the material covered may be classified approximately as follows:

Vol. 1 (9 chapters, 662 pages) discusses the physician and hospital, together with their legal obligations, both jointly and individually; fractures and dislocations; injuries to the spinal column.

Vol. 2 (7 chapters, 771 pages) deals with specific fractures and dislocations; injuries to the back and neck; traumatic arthritis.

Vol. 3 (12 chapters, 727 pages) is concerned chiefly with damage to the nervous system, psychiatry, disability evaluation and treatment.

Vol. 4 (4 chapters, 715 pages) discusses general surgery, burns, nervous system injuries and the use and dangers of X-rays.

Vol. 5 (6 chapters, 793 pages) deals with injuries to chest and cardiovascular system; gynecology, obstetrics and cancer.

Vol. 6 (7 chapters, 757 pages) covers various injuries to eyes, ears, nose and throat, orthopedic surgery and plastic repair, urology and skin diseases.

To attorneys who frequently find themselves involved in lawsuits concerning personal injury or malfunction, this cyclopedia should be of superlative value, not only for its well-ordered consideration of the medical

phases of such cases, but in the purely legal aspects as well. The numerous contributors, the editorial board and the publishers are to be complimented on having made a genuine contribution to the better understanding of this field where medicine and law overlap.

*C. W. Muehlberger, Ph.D.,  
Extramural Lecturer in Pharmacology,  
University of Michigan Medical School*