



Exploring the Reality in Forensics and Forensic Medicine

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DESCRIPTION

Forensics and forensic medicine play pivotal roles in the criminal justice system and healthcare industry, respectively. These fields have captured the public's fascination through popular media portrayals, leading to misconceptions and exaggerated expectations. In this article, we delve into the reality of forensics and forensic medicine, shedding light on their true nature, capabilities, and limitations.

Forensics: beyond the glamour

In the diverse subject of forensic science, evidence is gathered and examined for investigative and legal reasons using scientific methods and principles. While popular media tends to portray forensic investigations as swift and foolproof, the reality is far more complex. Forensic examinations often require meticulous attention to detail, time-consuming analysis, and collaboration between various experts.

One common misconception is the portrayal of forensic investigators as superheroes who can solve any case with a single piece of evidence. In reality, forensic science can provide valuable insights and support investigations, but it rarely provides instant solutions. Forensic experts painstakingly analyze evidence such as DNA, fingerprints, and ballistics, relying on a combination of scientific methods, experience, and expertise. Their work contributes to the overall investigative process, but it is just one piece of the puzzle.

Limitations and challenges in forensic science

Forensic science, like any scientific discipline, has its limitations and challenges. One significant challenge is the reliance on outdated or flawed techniques that have been discredited in recent years. This issue has led to wrongful convictions and raised concerns about the reliability of certain forensic methods, such as hair analysis or bite mark comparison.

Another limitation is the possibility of human error. Forensic experts are susceptible to biases, fatigue, and subjective interpretation of evidence. It is crucial to implement rigorous quality control measures, such as blind testing and peer review, to minimize these potential errors.

Additionally, the portrayal of forensic investigations as glamorous and exciting can create unrealistic expectations for the field's capabilities. While forensic science has made significant advancements in recent years, there are still limitations to what it can achieve. DNA analysis, for example, has revolutionized criminal investigations, but it is not a magic bullet that can solve every case. Factors like sample degradation, low DNA quantities, or incomplete databases can hamper the process.

Forensic medicine: separating fact from fiction

Forensic medicine, also known as legal medicine or medical jurisprudence, is the application of medical knowledge to legal issues. It involves the examination of individuals for the determination of cause and manner of death, analysis of injuries, and assessment of medical evidence in legal cases.

Contrary to popular belief, forensic medicine is not solely focused on high-profile murder cases. It encompasses a wide range of scenarios, including assessing the cause of accidental deaths, identifying victims of disasters, and evaluating injuries in cases of alleged abuse or assault. Forensic pathologists, who perform autopsies and analyze medical evidence, play a vital role in determining the facts surrounding a death.

However, the reality of forensic medicine is less dramatic than the depictions seen on television. The process of conducting an autopsy is meticulous and time-consuming, involving thorough examination of organs, tissues, and external injuries. Contrary to the rapid-fire revelations portrayed in crime dramas, it can take weeks or even months to obtain the final autopsy report.

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Received: 14-Apr-2023, Manuscript No. JCMS-23-21560; **Editor assigned:** 17-Apr-2023, Pre QC No. JCMS-23-21560 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 01-May-2023, QC No JCMS-23-21560; **Revised:** 08-May-2023, Manuscript No. JCMS-23-21560(R); **Published:** 15-May-2023, DOI: 10.35248/2593-9947.23.7.236

Citation: Hong K (2023) Exploring the Reality in Forensics and Forensic Medicine. J Clin Med Sci.7:236.

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