

BOOK REVIEW

Roger E. Mittleman,¹ M.D.

A Review of Rape—The Evidential Examination and Management of Adult Female Rape Victim

REFERENCE: Green, W. M., *Rape—The Evidential Examination and Management of the Adult Female Rape Victim*, Lexington Books, Lexington, MA, 1988, 174 pp.

The purpose of this book is to provide a “single comprehensive reference” addressing “all the major facets” of rape as well as providing background information bridging the “gap among the many different professionals who are responsible for assessing and helping the rape victim.” The text is divided into six topics including: “Historical Perspectives and Legal Issues,” “The Assailant,” “Medical History, Examinations and Evidence Collection,” “Psychological Impact,” “Forensic Evaluation,” and “Treatment Considerations.” Although such a short volume (only 156 pages of text) cannot be comprehensive, this book does provide a good, basic overview for professionals from varying disciplines.

Chapter II on “Historical Perspectives and Legal Issues” includes detailed definitions of rape, consent, and statutory rape as well as the topics of penal reform and discussion of unenlightening societal attitudes. The author’s writing style is somewhat redundant; however, the text is well referenced and informative. The use of many legal citations will be particularly important for those wishing further legal study.

Chapter V on “Psychological Impact” provides valuable information especially for those professionals who provide the victim’s first encounter with the health care team. This section details the victim’s response to the psychic trauma of rape and how the practitioner can best handle the initial therapy and a management. Although the psyche of the rapist (Chapter III) is briefly described, more emphasis is effectively placed on descriptions of the two types of sexual assaults (power versus anger rapes). The medical management of the rape victim (Chapter VII) is thoroughly discussed, including the treatment of the various venereal diseases as well as a summary of interceptive methods to prevent pregnancy.

Chapter IV on medical history, examinations, and evidence collection provides a good manual for the beginner (and a refresher course for the more experienced) on how to perform a thorough and adequate rape examination. Nevertheless, the absence of illustrations was unfortunate since they could have been used to demonstrate the various types of vulvar and anal injuries, particularly in regard to hymenal wounds. Such pictorial information would have been useful to the novice as well as for those of other disciplines. The author provides a thorough overview of the various tests in the criminalist’s armamentarium and also provides useful criteria for estimation of the postcoital interval.

¹Medical Examiner’s Department, One Bob Hope Rd., Miami, FL, 33136-1133.

A shortcoming of this book is the absence of discussion on courtroom testimony. It would have been helpful if the text contained a "Question and Answer" section in which the expert witness would answer questions based upon the facts of particular cases. Such a practical application of didactic material would have assisted those apprehensive about their day in court.

In conclusion, this book provides good background information for a basic understanding of the many facets of rape. The experienced professional will find the text to be a useful refresher course as well as a source of pertinent references; however, the main value of this book is its utility as a tool for the beginning rape treatment professional and those of other groups (for example, attorneys and criminalists) who require an overview of the subject.