



S24. LABORATORY ANALYSIS AND FACTORS AFFECTING THESE ANALYSES IN POSTMORTEM TOXICOLOGY

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Postmortem toxicology which is the part of Forensic Toxicology deals with the analysis of alcohol, drugs, illicit drugs or other poisons may have caused or contributed to the death. Postmortem toxicology differs from clinical toxicology (therapeutic drug monitoring) and emergency toxicology, which deals with the living patient.

Postmortem toxicology is an especially complex area since many factors may influence the interpretation of the results obtained. Possible factors may be related to: (a) the nature of the poison(s)/drug(s) present; (b) sample type, collection, transport and storage; (c) the analytical methodology used; (d) the circumstances of exposure; (e) mechanical factors such as trauma or inhalation of stomach contents; (f) pharmacological factors such as tolerance or synergy; (g) history of the case; and (h) postmortem changes (redistribution and incomplet distribution of drugs, decomposition of the body).