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Post-Mortem Case Records Natural Causes

Practical 09 / Clinical or documentation case

Aim

Use five fictional natural death records to practise concise post-mortem summaries.

Principle

The immediate cause and underlying disease are supported by the case history, examination and ancillary findings. The certifying clinician decides whether enough evidence is available.

Materials and Requirements

- Five teaching records in the observation table
- Case log with space for finding, opinion and pending information

Procedure

1. For each record, list the principal findings and identify the main organ system.
2. Work through the five case cards in order. Enter a case code, clinical course, organ involved and the principal examination finding, using a new row for each record.
3. Review the pattern of the evidence before assigning a cause. For example, compare coronary pathology with evidence of recent myocardial injury, or pulmonary vessel findings with the documented venous source.
4. Draft an immediate cause and an underlying condition only where the supplied facts support them.
5. Draft a short sequence showing the immediate disease and the preceding condition where support exists. Identify a coexisting condition separately if its role has yet to be established.
6. State one further report or history item that would help strengthen the opinion.
7. Select a targeted next source such as relevant histology, charted laboratory results, prior cardiovascular history or medication timing. Explain why it would strengthen or change the opinion.
8. Ask the instructor to review each entry and record any revision.
9. Compare the five sequences for plausible timing and clear language. Correct unsupported causal statements after review and note whether each case is provisionally supported or pending.

Precautions

- Teaching summaries are fictional and deliberately brief.
- Use stated evidence to support each opinion.

Observations and Interpretation

Post-Mortem Case Records Natural Causes

Observations and Record

Item	What to record	What it tells you
Case 01	Coronary thrombosis and recent myocardial necrosis	Acute myocardial infarction with coronary disease
Case 02	Lobar consolidation with acute inflammation	Pneumonia pattern
Case 03	Large cerebral haemorrhage and known chronic hypertension	Intracerebral haemorrhage with relevant history
Case 04	Large pulmonary embolus and documented deep-vein thrombus	Pulmonary embolism arising from venous thrombosis
Case 05	Ketosis, markedly elevated glucose and supportive medical records	Diabetic ketoacidosis pattern

Worked Example

For Case 01, record the recent myocardial injury and the supporting coronary finding. Review prior symptoms and histology before offering a provisional causal sequence.

Result and Interpretation

A supported opinion connects the anatomical and clinical evidence. Document the difference between established findings and provisional causal conclusions.

Viva Questions and Answers

Why review the clinical history in Case 05?

Biochemical findings are interpreted with investigation timing and the disease history.

What is an underlying cause?

The disease or injury that initiated the sequence leading to death.

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