UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC STUDIES

B.A. CRIMINOLOGY 2006-2007
FRS 2009 INTRODUCTION to FORENSIC PATHOLOGY
SEPTEMBER RESIT SESSION

4th September 2007 9.15 a.m. - 11.15 a.m.

CREDIT VALUE: 4 ECTS CREDITS

English Language dictionary is allowed for non Maltese students.

Answer all 60 questions.

References to Law imply Maltese Legislation, unless stated otherwise.

Each question has one stem with Five statements.

Mark each statement as True or False.
Encircle the correct answer.

Note Negative Marking

For each statement,
a correct answer earns +1 Mark
a wrong answer earns -1 Mark
a blank answer earns 0 Mark

INDEX No.:
1. The Court of Magistrates in Malta:
   a. also has jurisdiction in Gozo
   b. has civil jurisdiction
   c. acts as a court of appeal for civil cases
   d. acts as a court of inquiry for cases of grievous bodily harm
   e. may sit with a jury

2. The Magistrate in Malta:
   a. is autonomous
   b. is appointed by the Attorney General
   c. conducts an inquiry in a case of homicide
   d. issues a death certificate
   e. establishes the manner (e.g. natural, accident) of death

3. These deaths should be referred to the Magistrate:
   a. all deaths of foreign nationals
   b. a death following a fall from the roof of a house
   c. a death from cancer
   d. a death following an accident at work
   e. a hanging

4. Brain stem death:
   a. is characterised by structural damage to the brain stem
   b. affects the brain centre responsible for circulation
   c. is the legal definition of death in Maltese law
   d. is reversible
   e. is diagnosed under strict medical criteria

5. Regarding organ donation for transplantation, in Malta:
   a. a donor card is regulated by legislation
   b. heart transplants are carried out in Malta
   c. a potential donor must be examined for infections
   d. kidneys may be donated two days after death
   e. a kidney may be donated by a live patient

6. A Final Death Certificate in Malta:
   a. provides information for mortality statistics
   b. is necessary for the death to be registered at the Public Registry
   c. includes the manner (e.g. suicide) of death
   d. is necessary for burial
   e. is necessary for execution of the will
7. A medico-legal autopsy:
   a. aims to establish the cause of death
   b. must always be performed following a death in custody
   c. is ordered by the police
   d. is ordered by the hospital authorities
   e. requires the consent of the relatives

8. Information obtained from a medico-legal autopsy:
   a. is important for the administration of criminal justice
   b. becomes part of the ‘process verbal’
   c. must be given to the hospital authorities
   d. must be given to the deceased’s insurance company
   e. is easily available to the relatives of the deceased

9. With regard to the manner of death:
   a. hanging may be accidental
   b. homicide can be established just from the post-mortem examination
   c. a natural death may be the cause of an accident
   d. examination of the scene may exclude a suicide
   e. a stab wound on the back is necessarily due to homicide

10. The following are useful in identification of a body found in a fire:
    a. surgical scars
    b. tattoos
    c. skull X-rays
    d. toxicological analysis
    e. clothing

11. Forensic dental examination:
    a. requires antemortem records to provide definite identification
    b. will establish age, in a person between 40 and 50 years
    c. is of no value when a full denture is present
    d. includes assessment of bite marks
    e. is the role of the pathologist

12. With regard to disposal of a body, in Malta:
    a. it is the responsibility of the police
    b. a medico-legal case requires authorisation by the magistrate
    c. it is delayed until a final death certificate is issued
    d. requires a burial permit
    e. secret disposal of a body is a crime
13. The following are useful in the estimation of the time of death:
   a. body temperature  T  F
   b. cadaveric spasm  T  F
   c. rigor mortis  T  F
   d. information from eye witnesses  T  F
   e. routine use of blood tests  T  F

14. Body temperature after death:
   a. is best recorded in the mouth  T  F
   b. is measured by a clinical thermometer  T  F
   c. is calculated from serial measurements  T  F
   d. falls faster if the body is in moving water rather than on the ground  T  F
   e. is controlled by sweating  T  F

15. The fall in body temperature after death:
   a. occurs entirely in a linear fashion  T  F
   b. is hastened in obese people  T  F
   c. is related to the environment  T  F
   d. is affected by gravity  T  F
   e. is faster in a body in bed than on the floor  T  F

16. In post-mortem lividity (hypostasis):
   a. blood is present in blood vessels  T  F
   b. blood is present in the tissues  T  F
   c. a cherry pink colour indicates alcohol poisoning  T  F
   d. the pattern indicates the position of the body at death  T  F
   e. the pale areas indicate local pressure  T  F

17. Rigor mortis:
   a. is due to the effect of gravity  T  F
   b. is due to a chemical reaction  T  F
   c. lasts until decomposition sets in  T  F
   d. is first apparent in the abdominal muscles  T  F
   e. is first prominent in the face  T  F

18. A body may be entirely stiff because of:
   a. refrigeration  T  F
   b. dying in a fire  T  F
   c. dying outside in cold weather  T  F
   d. decomposition  T  F
   e. the effect of gravity  T  F
19. In decomposition:
   a. the body classically shows adipocere  
   b. changes are mainly due to uncontrolled growth of gut bacteria  
   c. marbling outlines the areas of lividity  
   d. the abdomen is swollen  
   e. the most resistant organ is the liver  

20. With regard to decomposition:
   a. high environmental temperature hastens the process  
   b. predators hasten decomposition  
   c. an autopsy is often useless  
   d. insect activity is useful in establishing the time of death  
   e. insect activity is useful in establishing the place of death  

21. The following are classical abrasions:
   a. multiple thin linear marks on the back of the body, in a victim dragged across the ground  
   b. a black eye  
   c. rope impressions on the neck in a hanging  
   d. a tear of the liver  
   e. finger nail scratches  

22. Abrasions:
   a. occur when an object slides across the skin  
   b. occur when the body slides across the road  
   c. characteristically have the shape of the weapon  
   d. gape as the skin is stretched  
   e. may be patterned  

23. A bruise:
   a. is due to blunt trauma to blood vessels  
   b. has skin tags that indicate the direction of injury  
   c. occurs more easily in the elderly  
   d. generally indicates the weapon used  
   e. that is green colour, indicates injury within one hour  

24. A bruise:
   a. may move by gravity  
   b. may only be apparent the next day  
   c. occurs only in the skin  
   d. may also be called a contusion  
   e. is commonly caused by a surgical incision
25. A laceration:
   a. is a split of the skin  T  F
   b. is caused by blunt injury  T  F
   c. is caused by a cutting instrument  T  F
   d. shows tissue bridges in the depth of the wound  T  F
   e. appears to have sharp margins over bony prominences  T  F

26. A laceration:
   a. often shows surrounding bruising  T  F
   b. is an incised wound  T  F
   c. of the abdomen has regular margins  T  F
   d. of the forehead may lead to a black eye  T  F
   e. of the liver, may only occur when the overlying skin is torn  T  F

27. With regard to a stab wound:
   a. it is caused by a cutting instrument with a point  T  F
   b. it may be caused by a blunt knife  T  F
   c. the length of the skin wound is longer than the depth  T  F
   d. may be caused by broken glass  T  F
   e. it may occur by falling onto a spiked railing  T  F

28. A stab wound:
   a. may have a track (depth) longer than the length of the blade  T  F
   b. may have a track (depth) shorter than the length of the blade  T  F
   c. a triangular shape is typical of a single edged knife blade  T  F
   d. necessarily requires considerable force by the perpetrator  T  F
   e. may be caused by scissors  T  F

29. In the victim of a road traffic accident:
   a. injuries on the body may indicate the pattern of collision  T  F
   b. injuries may indicate the position of the victim in the car  T  F
   c. blood alcohol estimation is only needed if the victim was the driver  T  F
   d. a neck injury is typical in pedestrian victims  T  F
   e. natural disease may be the cause of death  T  F

30. Maltese legislation regarding drinking and driving:
   a. sets a limit of 35μg of alcohol /100ml of breath  T  F
   b. sets a limit of 80mg of alcohol /100ml of breath  T  F
   c. refusal to give a sample is an offence  T  F
   d. authorises the police officer to take a blood sample  T  F
   e. allows spot checks of all drivers  T  F
31. Regarding safety on the roads:
   a. driver error is the commonest cause for a road traffic accident  T  F
   b. driving under the influence of drugs is not a criminal offence in Malta  T  F
   c. seat belts are unnecessary if the car has airbags  T  F
   d. a seat belt is most effective at preventing death in a high speed collision  T  F
   e. motorcyclists are more at risk of a fatal accident than car drivers  T  F

32. A rifled weapon is characterised by the following:
   a. the presence of a rifled bore  T  F
   b. the use of lead shot as ammunition  T  F
   c. usually there is no exit wound  T  F
   d. greater accuracy in targeting than a shotgun  T  F
   e. firing the weapon leaves specific marks on the ammunition  T  F

33. In a contact shotgun wound to the temple:
   a. the entry wound is scalloped  T  F
   b. usually there is a large exit wound  T  F
   c. the muzzle may leave an abrasion  T  F
   d. there are surrounding pellet holes  T  F
   e. there is tattooing  T  F

34. In a suicidal death from a firearm:
   a. the wound must always be a contact wound  T  F
   b. the commonest site of entry is on the abdomen  T  F
   c. the commonest site of entry is on the back  T  F
   d. the weapon must be at the scene (unless removed by relatives)  T  F
   e. there may be previous attempted suicide  T  F

35. The following procedures, on a victim of homicide, are necessary:
   a. photographic documentation of injuries  T  F
   b. collection of blood for toxicological investigation  T  F
   c. lifting of fingerprints  T  F
   d. collection of nail scrapings  T  F
   e. examination of the clothing  T  F

36. Grievous bodily harm occurs when there is:
   a. danger of permanent mental infirmity  T  F
   b. disfigurement of the hands  T  F
   c. a stab wound to the abdomen, just penetrating the peritoneum  T  F
   d. stab wound to right chest, involving only subcutaneous tissues  T  F
   e. injuries necessitating 5 weeks in hospital  T  F
37. Torture:
a. is limited specifically to infliction of physical suffering T F
b. may involve the use of electrical shocks T F
c. always leaves obvious scars T F
d. excludes police coercion during interview of suspects T F
e. is an abuse of human rights T F

38. The following are the classical signs of asphyxia:
a. congestion of the face T F
b. petechiae in the eyes T F
c. finger nail scratch marks on the neck T F
d. ballooned lungs T F
e. pulmonary oedema T F

39. In smothering:
a. there is obstruction of the nose and mouth T F
b. there are extensive injuries on the face and neck T F
c. the victim may be a child T F
d. may occur when a heavy object falls on the chest T F
e. the assailant compresses the neck T F

40. In classic manual strangulation:
a. there is a horizontal groove on the neck T F
b. there are no bruises on the skin of the neck T F
c. there are marked internal injuries in the soft tissues of the neck T F
d. lividity is mainly in the legs T F
e. the ligature is usually a rope T F

41. In strangulation by ligature:
a. there must always be a mark on the skin of the neck T F
b. the mark on the neck may indicate the type of ligature used T F
c. the manner of death is usually a suicide T F
d. it may be accidental T F
e. fingernail scratch marks can only belong to the assailant T F

42. In a typical case of hanging:
a. the victim is a male T F
b. the feet are always off the ground T F
c. lividity will develop on the dependent legs T F
d. the ligature leaves a horizontal groove on the neck T F
e. the ligature leaves an inverted V shaped mark on the neck T F
43. In a typical case of hanging:
   a. the death is commonly a suicide  
   b. the ligature is most commonly a rope  
   c. the suspension point is usually under the chin  
   d. there are marked internal injuries on the neck  
   e. there is fracture of the cervical spine

44. Scalds:
   a. are caused by hot liquids  
   b. are worse on uncovered skin  
   c. cause deep burns  
   d. the pattern indicates the flow of liquid  
   e. are always accidental

45. Death in a fire may be due to:
   a. a pugilistic attitude  
   b. falling masonry  
   c. carbon monoxide poisoning  
   d. inhalation of toxic gases  
   e. cardiac arrest

46. The following features in a body found in a fire indicate being alive in the fire:
   a. soot in the mouth  
   b. soot in the airways of the lungs  
   c. heat fractures of the limbs  
   d. a high carboxyhaemoglobin level in the blood  
   e. third degree (full thickness) burns

47. Electrocution:
   a. causes death only when the current passes through the head  
   b. may cause an irregular heart rhythm  
   c. death is more likely with contact with wet skin  
   d. entry point may be a small burn  
   e. electrocution from power lines occurs without contact

48. The following indicate death by drowning:
   a. seaweed in the hands  
   b. washerwoman's changes on the hands and feet  
   c. ballooned lungs  
   d. lividity on the front  
   e. presence of diatoms in the bone marrow
49. In a body recovered from the sea, these features indicate having been alive in the water:
   a. sand in the mouth  T  F
   b. cadaveric spasm    T  F
   c. head injuries      T  F
   d. pink lividity      T  F
   e. presence of diatoms in the bone marrow T  F

50. Regarding dead bodies found in the sea:
   a. hypothermia may be the cause of death  T  F
   b. natural disease may be the cause of death T  F
   c. injuries are always antemortem          T  F
   d. drowning is commoner in fresh water than in the sea T  F
   e. decomposition is faster in water than in air T  F

51. For a charge of carnal knowledge with violence:
   a. violence is presumed if the victim does not consent  T  F
   b. violence is presumed if the victim is a 14 year old girl T  F
   c. sperm must be retrieved from the clothing of a female victim T  F
   d. there must be genital injuries               T  F
   e. the pattern of sexual activity of the victim must be known T  F

52. In the investigation of a case of alleged rape:
   a. the clothing of the victim is examined          T  F
   b. the victim’s blood group must be checked       T  F
   c. a test for HIV does not require patient consent T  F
   d. nail scrapings are taken from the perpetrator   T
   e. examination of the suspect perpetrator is not necessary T  F

53. Examination of a female victim of rape:
   a. should start with the genital examination       T  F
   b. includes an assessment of her age                T  F
   c. includes the history of recent sexual activity   T  F
   d. samples from the genital region are only examined for sperm T  F
   e. bite marks must be swabbed for saliva           T  F

54. In Malta, in criminal abortion:
   a. there is termination of a viable pregnancy      T  F
   b. legally, the fetus must be older than 28 weeks  T  F
   c. a woman may not be charged of procuring her own abortion T  F
   d. a woman who consents to have an abortion may be prosecuted T  F
   e. the use of plants to cause an abortion is not a crime T  F

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55. For a charge of infanticide, in Malta:
   a. the accused may be any member of the family       T  F
   b. only the mother may be accused                  T  F
   c. it is necessary to prove that the child was born alive T  F
   d. the child must have been less than one month old  T  F
   e. the death must always be due to smothering      T  F

56. Physical abuse of children is:
   a. suspected if there are scalds on the buttocks and arms T  F
   b. characterised by multiple bruises on the legs        T  F
   c. characterised by repetitive injuries                 T  F
   d. suspected from the strange story given to explain injuries T  F
   e. rarely caused by a parent                           T  F

57. In child abuse, police can initiate charges on their own if:
   a. the child is ten                                     T  F
   b. the child is fourteen                                T  F
   c. the child is abused by the guardian                  T  F
   d. the abuse occurs in a public place                   T  F
   e. there is physical violence                           T  F

58. The use of DNA fingerprinting:
   a. may confirm a putative father                        T  F
   b. may exclude a putative father                        T  F
   c. may establish a suspect was on the scene of a crime  T  F
   d. always requires a blood sample                      T  F
   e. is useful in identification of skeletal remains     T  F

59. With regard to alcohol:
   a. food in the stomach delays absorption                T  F
   b. it is eliminated in the urine, breath and sweat     T  F
   c. it may be responsible for the causation of an accident T  F
   d. habitual drinkers increase their tolerance          T  F
   e. intoxication absolves a person from a criminal charge T  F

60. Carbon monoxide:
   a. competes with oxygen                                 T  F
   b. poisoning is suspected when lividity is purple      T  F
   c. a low blood level excludes being alive in a fire    T  F
   d. a high blood level indicates being alive in a fire  T  F
   e. is present in car exhaust fumes                    T  F