

## Book review

Two medico-legal books from the renowned prolific law book writer Professor Catherine Tay have recently been published. These precious rarities should find their place on the shelf of every medical or law library. Even though the book is Singapore-oriented, the broad principles and approach should be applicable to every corner of the world.

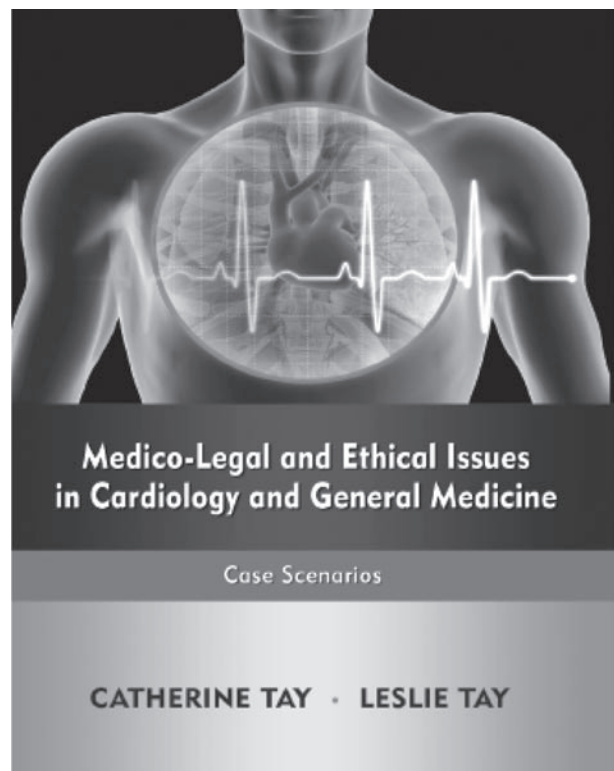
The first book is on medico-legal and ethical issues in cardiology and general medicine in the form of 44 case scenarios (Figure 1), with a cardiology registrar as co-author. At first glance, it seems that it may not be relevant to Emergency Medicine. However, at least three quarters of the case scenarios are related to the daily practice of Emergency Medicine, and the remaining may also be useful and interesting.

Examples of interesting and relevant scenarios include:-

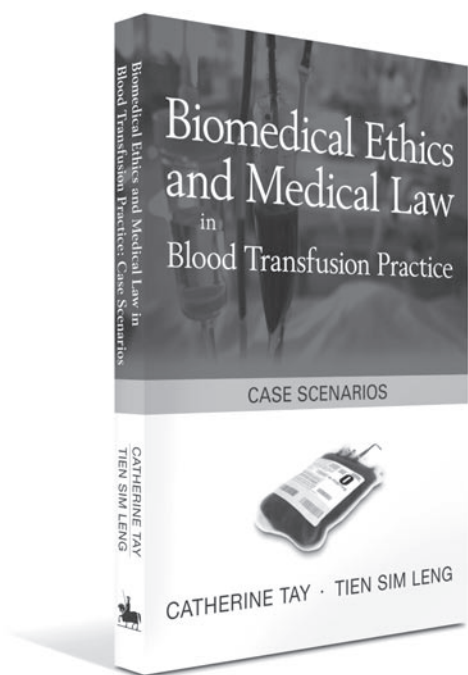
- Driving after a heart attack
- Driving when medically unfit – should the authorities be informed?
- Medical assistance on board a plane
- Fitness to fly – what are the guidelines?
- Air travel during pregnancy – fitness to fly
- Assisting in a road traffic accident
- Family involvement in informed consent – is it appropriate?
- Issues on treating a mentally incompetent patient
- Advance medical directive
- Johovah's Witness and their children – can parents refuse a blood transfusion?
- Self-discharge – is the patient competent?"
- A&E assessment of chest pain – negligence
- Bed shortage – a physician's obligation
- A family's request to continue a futile resuscitation – what should you do?
- A child's right to die – does this right exist?
- Withdrawal of treatment
- Missed diagnosis – who is liable?
- Informing a patient about a colleague's inappropriate treatment

- Breaking bad news – the essence of good communication
- Withholding information and diagnosis – is it ethical?
- Failure to refer

The second book is on biomedical ethics and medical law in blood transfusion practice in the form of 20 case scenarios (Figure 2), with a haematologist as co-author. Other than the scenarios on "patient refuses blood transfusion in an emergency" and "proper documentation in blood transfusion", it seems there



**Figure 1.** *Title:* Medico-legal and ethical issues in cardiology and general medicine: case scenarios. *Authors:* Professor Catherine Tay and Dr. Leslie Tay. *Publisher:* McGraw-Hill, Singapore. *Edition:* First. *Publication date:* June 2010. *Pages:* 200. *ISBN:* 9780071312905/0071312900



**Figure 2.** *Title:* Biomedical ethics and medical law in blood transfusion practice: case scenarios. *Authors:* Prof. Catherine Tay and Prof. Tien Sim Leng. *Publisher:* Armour Publishing, Singapore. *Edition:* First. *Publication date:* June 2010. *Pages:* 192. *ISBN:* 9789814270939/9814270938

is little relevance to the field of Emergency Medicine. However, all the scenarios are interesting and thought-stimulating. The principles and lines of thinking can be applied in general.

The two books also supply useful reference materials at the appendices such as the Declaration of Helsinki and the Belmont Report. In this increasingly litigious world, medical practitioners should be familiar with the relevant laws and ethics. Catherine's medico-legal book series provide the answers and references to daily routines and rare clinical encounters.

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