

Q.

Describe the approach to assigning the cause of death, where multiple diagnoses are established on the medicolegal investigation.

A.

According to the ICD-10 guidelines;

The cause of death has two parts:

Part I: Immediate cause of death

This constitutes the causal pathway of death.

This reports the sequence of events that lead to the death proceeding in a backward manner starting from the final disease/condition leading to death. This is logged as (a).

In addition to the underlying cause of death, this part reports the sequence of events leading to death as well as other conditions significantly contributing to death. This is logged as (b), (c), (d), etc depending on the total number present. All these subparts are put on separate lines.

Part II: Contributing but not related to Part I

This reports the other significant conditions that contributed to the death (as they were present at the time of death) but however, did not lead to the underlying cause reported in Part I.

NB:- The mechanism of death e.g. cardiac arrest or respiratory arrest should not be reported as the immediate cause of death as only affirms the fact of death, therefore, the mechanism of death provides no additional information on the cause of death.

Also ensure whenever listing anything in Part I and II cite the ICD code too in the same subpart.