

Preface

Sudden in-custody restraint deaths have emerged as a critical and important problem for police, correctional, and medical care workers. The scope and magnitude of the problem clearly reveals that the subject matter is worthy of further consideration. Although the frequency of these deaths is very low, the criticality of its occurrence requires attention to the subject matter. The purpose of *Sudden Deaths in Custody* is to provide current information that addresses the issue from a number of perspectives. It is our purpose to assemble, under one title, current research that addresses the varying facets that underscore the nature of sudden in-custody deaths. The intent is to provide information that can further educate and assist those officers, administrators, investigators, trainers, and medical personnel who must interact, intervene, and make decisions about how to prevent sudden in-custody deaths.

Sudden Deaths in Custody specifically addresses sudden in-custody deaths that occur after a violent confrontation. Such incidents may occur after police or correction officers' intervention, but also include incidents that may occur in a mental health facility or emergency medical field setting. The deaths described in this volume all involve sudden death within minutes or hours of contact preceded by one or more of the following: violent confrontation with police or corrections personnel, forcible control measures, and behavior influenced by a chemical substance, or mental impairment. Incidents involving custodial suicides, homicides, accidents, fatal pursuits, or police shootings are excluded.

The contents of *Sudden Deaths in Custody* include an assessment of the medical considerations involved in these cases; how the stress of the encounter plays a role on the physiological responses of the subject; the influence of chemical substances on the behaviors of the violent person and their role in contributing to the death of the person; and an explanation of the role of excited delirium. Additionally, the book addresses the use of force by neck holds, restraints, aerosols, tasers, and other measures. Specific case examples are provided, which illustrate the nature and problems associated with these deaths, along with the issues involved in performing a custodial death investigation.

A description of the civil liability issues that emerge from custodial deaths is provided by examining case decisions surrounding them. Finally, administrative issues are addressed. These include risk management strategies, policy and procedure concerns, training issues, subject monitoring issues, transportation concerns, officer incident reporting, and investigating an incident from the agency perspective.

The contributors to *Sudden Deaths in Custody* include three forensic pathologists, six medical physicians, and one PhD. All of the contributing authors are experts in their fields, having researched and published information on this important subject.

Darrell L. Ross, PhD
Theodore C. Chan, MD