



## Jurisprudence Section – 2004

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### **E3 Changing Differences in the Courtroom on the Admissibility of Testimony Concerning Poisons: Dr. Coppolino, Dr. X to Now**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be able to determine how the courts look at expert testimony from then to now will be discussed and compared so that lawyers can understand in what ways a forensic pathologist contributes to these types of cases.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating that each state and each judge might look at the expert's testimony differently even though the procedure utilized by the expert may be the same.

In the 1960s, the case of the century was then tried by F. Lee Bailey in both New Jersey and Florida. Dr. Carl Coppolino, an anesthesiologist, was accused of killing two people — a neighbor and his wife. The prosecution of Dr. Coppolino in the Florida case relied on whether or not Mrs. Coppolino had the breakdown products of succinylcholine in her system in order for the jury to make a determination as to whether or not her husband had killed her. The court allowed the testimony to come into evidence and Dr. Coppolino was convicted. The same issues concerning autopsies, exhumations, tissue samples and breakdown products of poisons have been dealt with in many cases including the prosecution of Dr. X in New Jersey and many high profile prosecutions today.

**Coppolino, Succinylcholine, Poison**