

Commentary

QJM

The arithmetic of risk*

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develop a 'social physics' based on the law of large numbers, finding immutable patterns in social phenomena, and deriving large-scale regularities

more clearly. He illustrates his in relation to a range of topics: the problem of informed consent; counselling before an HIV test (one of his postgraduate students was found for a test at a different German clinic and was not informed in most of them); the O.J. Simpson case (where Gigeren is clearly repudiated the question of how likely it is that someone who has a life-threatening illness will be murdered here, nor, indeed, from the question of how likely it is, given that a woman has been

murdered, that she has been murdered by her partner who previously had been her: perhaps by all accounts; and the problem of communicating the complexity of DNA fingerprinting to judges, lawyers and jurors, many of whom seem to be virtually ignorant. The book is a timely and lively dictionary, but it is not a dictionary; nor is there anything that has the problem of raising an important one that is likely to become more obvious in the future.