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Book reviews

Visual Electrodiagnostic Testing: A Practical Guide for the Clinician. By RONALD E. CARR and IRWIN M. SIEGEL. Pp. 126. US\$32.00. Williams and Wilkins: Baltimore. 1982.

It is claimed that this is a complete practical guide to visual electrodiagnostic testing and that there is no other text available. Neither claim is true. This book is essentially a description of the authors' method of electroretinography and its application to the study of degenerative choroido-retinal disease.

There are 2 main sections. The first deals with basic concepts and methods. The relevant points of anatomy and physiology in relation to the electroretinogram (ERG) are described very well. In the chapter on the clinical ERG it is not stated whether or not the pupil is to be dilated, but the illustrations imply that it is. The Burian-Allen lens is recommended. This advice is regrettable, especially as the gold foil electrode is mentioned in the chapter on foveal responses. One of the most important concepts of the foveal ERG is not mentioned in this chapter but is tucked away on p. 98. The use of skin electrodes in the awake child is not mentioned, but it is claimed that ketamine has no effect on the visually evoked response (VER). The authors have obviously little use for the electro-oculogram (EOG). Their reasons are fair comment on the length of the test, its variability, and the need for patient co-operation. However, the test does have more merit than they concede.

The chapter on the visually evoked cortical potential (VECP is but one of the many acronyms) is extremely disappointing. Perhaps this is because the authors have been unable to find a reliable clinical application for the many exuberant experimental claims. The very restricted use of the flash VER is rightly noted; an adequate examination of the pupil response is often as good. The complexities of the pattern evoked response are ignored. There is no mention of the difference between a steady state and transient response, although the authors seem to prefer the former. The fact that the mode of presentation of a pattern changes the form of the response and even its laterality is not noted. Midline electrodes are used. This excludes the study of lesions behind the optic nerve. Details of instrumentation are referred to chapter 9 but the reader will seek in vain.

The second section is clinical. It starts with a diagnostic guide showing the 4 main types of ERG abnormality, listing the conditions likely to cause these changes and a note of the retinal sensitivity abnormality to be expected. The various choroidoretinal disorders are then considered in more detail according to the authors' classification. The relative merits of the various tests in a clinical situation are discussed, and it is in this section that the oscillatory potentials of the ERG are described. Their value in the assessment of diabetic retinal disease is not confirmed. There is a brief mention of the use of the tests in opacities of the media with the warning that focal lesions, especially of the macula, will not be detected. There is a final section concerning apparatus and patient protection, colour vision, retinal sensitivity, and dark adaptation.

The book is neither a balanced guide to visual electro-

physiological tests nor a critical review of the literature. It is a description of the methods used by 2 very experienced workers in this field and as such it can be thoroughly recommended.

J. H. KELSEY

Eye Disease in the Tropics. By F. C. RODGER. Pp. 127. £6.00. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1981.

It takes a rare courage to cover major blinding diseases in the tropics, eye diseases commonly found in the tropics, ocular complications of the common tropical diseases, and rare tropical eye conditions in a mere 120 pages of print. Certainly so when this is sandwiched between 2 introductory chapters on planning and information and a concluding chapter on laboratory aids to diagnosis. The objective to be both short and comprehensive has been achieved at the cost of a very concentrated text requiring of the reader a strong digestion.

The book is well written and exciting, full of little gems and sound advice. The preparatory information of chapter 2 is well presented and essential reading for any doctor new to the tropics. Major blinding diseases are adequately covered, cataract having only brief attention, but nutritional ophthalmia is particularly well done. There is a very balanced selection of topics in the other chapters. The discussion on the many causes of optic atrophy in the tropics, a recurring problem and puzzle, is illuminating and practical.

The account of rare tropical eye conditions, optimistically described as a chapter for quick reference, contains a wealth of detail on disease groups covering infectious diseases, the zoonoses, parasitic infestations, and mycotic infections, all of which may confront and confuse the tropical doctor. Simple laboratory techniques are clearly described in a valuable concluding chapter, which could be further improved by a list of essential equipment.

Fifty-four beautiful plates and some line drawings illuminate the text. What a pity that some, at least, are not in colour.

The author, with his customary aplomb and wide practical experience of the tropics, has produced a valuable book of reference. It will certainly be found on my clinic table if not by the bedside.

G. G. BISLEY

Current Concepts in Cataract Surgery. Selected Proceedings of the Seventh Biennial Cataract Surgical Congress. Eds. JARED M. EMERY and ADRIENNE C. JACOBSON. Pp. 338. £44.05. Prentice/Hall International: Hemel Hempstead, Herts. 1982.

This excellent book contains the selected proceedings of the Seventh Biennial Cataract Surgical Congress held in 1980. Dr Robert Walsh conceived and produced the first Biennial Cataract Surgical Congress in Miami in 1969. This original symposium and the subsequent 6 have been recorded in a series of annual volumes. The sixth volume was edited by Dr Jared J. Emery and in this the seventh volume he has been assisted by Adrienne C. Jacobson.

The present volume reflects the revolutionary advances in cataract surgery that have occurred during the last decade.



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