

therapy, the epidemiology of ROP, and developmental issues of blind children.

The book is easy to read and, being aimed at the paediatrician as well as the ophthalmologist, is relatively free of jargon. Inevitably some sections are more successful than others, but generally the standard is very high and the chapters well referenced. Those interested in the problems of analysing incidence statistics (not only ROP) are advised to read the interesting chapter on epidemiology by Alberman. A section devoted to the clinical evolution of ROP would have been welcome to give a clinical feel to this difficult subject: when does ROP start, how does it progress or regress, and the signs and time course of the development of cicatricial disease? Indeed the best description of the acute lesion is contained in the section on pathology by Garner.

The ophthalmologist looking to this book for guidance on whether to perform cryotherapy on an individual infant will be disappointed: these issues have yet to be resolved, but at least here the problem is discussed in a sensible manner. Despite a few minor qualifications this book can be enthusiastically recommended. It is by far the best currently available on ROP and is excellent value.

A FIELDER

Fechner's Intraocular Lenses. By JOHN J ALPAR AND PAUL U FECHNER. Pp. 499. DM 198.00. Georg Thieme Verlag: Stuttgart. 1986.

This is a very well produced volume with some good colour photographs of intraocular lens techniques and pathology, comprehensively covering the field of intraocular lenses. The book is well up to date, inevitably covering several lens designs which are now rarely used. As with many volumes, some of the black-and-white photographs are either taken from colour slides or prints and lack quality and definition. The bibliography is excellent and especially valuable for workers researching in this field. Both authors are well known authorities, and I can thoroughly recommend this excellent volume.

J L PEARCE

Retinopathy of Prematurity: Current Concepts and Controversies. By A R MCPHERSON, H M HITTNER AND F L KRETZER. Pp. 237. £40.50. Blackwell: Oxford, 1986.

The editors prepared this work with the following aims: to review the pathogenesis of ROP, to examine the vitamin E dilemma, and survey the surgical treatment of ROP. With 11 of the 19 contributors coming from Houston, Texas, the book represents largely the views of this group. Many topics of interest to the clinician are covered, but unfortunately the content is often disappointing. For instance, the section on ophthalmic examination of the premature infant is seriously lacking in common sense. This is a pity, as a sensible review of examination methods including the hazards of pupillary dilating agents is much needed. Chapters on the medico-legal aspects of ROP, although relating to practice in the

USA, are worth reading. The sections on neonatal intensive care and anaesthetic considerations are superficial, but they have value in alerting the ophthalmologist to the multiplicity of systemic problems which these infants may suffer and have to be considered.

Seven chapters are devoted to the treatment of ROP by cryotherapy, scleral buckling, or vitrectomy, and, while interesting and at times excellent, all are written by surgical protagonists. As the role of cryotherapy has yet to be precisely defined, a contribution reviewing our present state of ignorance on this topic would have been welcome. The spindle cell hypothesis of the pathogenesis of ROP and the beneficial effect of vitamin E or selenium naturally occupy a great deal of this book. It is too early to know whether this theory will stand the test of time but it has certainly made researchers and clinicians question established ideas. Unfortunately in this book these ideas are presented dogmatically as established fact with little room for manoeuvre. Generally this is a difficult book to read, the style of writing is very obviously North American, some section headings are too long (one contains 26 words), and diagrams are often highly complex with legends to match. The reader who needs to know what the abbreviation IRBP stands for will have to consult the index as there is no indication in the text.

By far the most interesting chapter in this book is by Hittner and Kretzer on the differential diagnosis of ROP. This is a difficult and often neglected topic, and their approach is fresh and exciting, although there are some surprising omissions such as persistent hyperplastic primary vitreous. Nevertheless, this section is relevant not only to ROP but also to the study of ocular developmental defects.

This book cannot be recommended to the general ophthalmologist, but those with a particular interest in paediatric ophthalmology will find certain sections worth reading.

A FIELDER

Medical Lasers: Science and Clinical Practice. By J A S CARRUTH AND A L MCKENZIE. Pp. 269. £19.50. Adam Hilger: Bristol. 1986.

This is a most informative book written by a well-known clinician in the field of medical lasers and coauthored by a physicist who is also a laser safety officer.

The first and last chapters deal with laser history, physics, tissue interaction, and safety, and describe common surgical lasers used today and those with potential for the future. There are separate chapters on the use of lasers in different specialties, including gynaecology, dermatology, otolaryngology, surgery, and photoradiation therapy for tumours. There is a chapter on ophthalmology written by a non-ophthalmologist, which contains a number of inaccuracies, but considering the size of the book and chapter most eye topics are mentioned.

The strengths of the book are that laser physics, usually forgotten, can readily be revised, and it gives an insight into uses and possibilities for treatment in other branches in medicine.

J JAGGER



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