Book reviews

Guide to an Effective Outpatient Ophthalmic Surgical Center. Edited by STEPHEN P GINSBERG. Pp. 250. £37.75. SLACK: New Jersey. 1985.

There can be few ophthalmologists working this side of the Atlantic who remain unaware of recent changes in the delivery of surgical care and the virtual imposition of outpatient ophthalmic surgery in the United States. The underlying reasons for change are less obvious, but in the American medical market place costs have escalated to a level unacceptable to the consumer and the reimbursement insurance agencies. The fundamental changes affecting surgical practice have to a large extent overtaken our American colleagues, prompting the publication of this manual aimed at the practitioner wishing to move with the times and establish his own outpatient surgical facility.

The editor has gathered together contributions from 26 authors wedded to the concepts and the practice of outpatient ophthalmic surgery. The introduction reviews briefly the history of outpatient surgery and sets out the advantages to the patient, the ophthalmologist, and society as a whole but with no mention of the possible disadvantages. The ground rules and basic requirements for establishing a personal surgical base are outlined, with the aim of a cost effective service, particularly for the care provider. The advice given to engage an experienced business consultant and simultaneously consult one's attorney and accountant neatly captures the ethos of many of the subsequent contributions. The remainder of the text deals with subjects as diverse as federal and state regulations, reimbursement and certification, and the construction and equipping of the multimillion dollar edifice. There are a number of interesting contributions concerning public relations and marketing, promotion of the service, and guidelines for the day-to-day running of the so-called ambulatory facility. An absorbing account is given of the medicolegal implications of outpatient surgery and that of professional liability, with some revealing statistics.

On first impression this manual would seem to have little to offer the British ophthalmologist working in the public or perhaps private sector. Many interesting issues are, however, raised, particularly in the areas of cost containment and budgeting as well as providing an insight into aspects of contemporary practice in the United States. A number of contributions are worth perusing and appear eminently relevant to the revised management structure of the National Health Service. Perhaps this book will ultimately become essential reading for those who elect to take on an extended managerial role or become a clinical budget holder.

R J COOLING

Atlas of Clinical Ophthalmology. By D. J. SPALTON, R A HITCHINGS, P A HUNTER. Pp. 331. £60.00. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1984.

This extremely handsome volume is an introduction to clinical ophthalmology and an illustrated reference work. It is designed to show the type of clinical material encountered in general ophthalmic practice and the eye as a reflection of

disease elsewhere. It is beautifully illustrated, and it is nicely broken down into chapters on different aspects of eye disease, the format being basically the same throughout. On the whole the balance of the chapters is good, though some do contain more specialised details than others. I particularly liked the large numbers of pathology pictures alongside those of the clinical disease, and there are many x-rays, CT scans, ultrasound scans, and fluorescein angiograms where relevant. Another excellent feature was that parallel with any complicated photograph there was an accurate line diagram clarifying the more complicated features.

My only criticism of the book is the rather confusing layout of the print. It is arranged in two columns, and sometimes it is not clear when to switch from one to the other.

I would strongly recommend the book to all ophthalmologists, and despite its cost I consider it offers excellent value for money. It certainly should be purchased by all hospitals with eye surgeons in training.

RONALD J MARSH

Brain Mechanisms and Spatial Vision. Eds. DAVID J. INGLE, MARC JEANNEROD, DAVID N. LEE. Pp. 470. £44.50. Martinus Nijhoff: Dordrecht, Netherlands. 1985.

This book results from a NATO Advanced Study Institute held in June 1983. The aim was to provide a forum for discussion between workers concerned with perception and those interested in electrophysiology. The rapid advance in our understanding of the neurophysiology of vision following the work of Hubel and Weisel has not been closely correlated with the behavioural output of given species of cortical detectors. The assembled 17 authors addressed themselves to these problems, and the book was edited by representatives from America, France, and Britain. The majority of papers were on aspects of visual perception and in particular depth perception, three dimensional vision, and their relations to movement. The opening chapter, on visual timing of interceptive action, discusses the visual aspects of catching a ball and the relationship of visual input to muscle skeletal co-ordination. Practical applications were studying the performance of crossing traffic and assessing the gaps between cars. Many papers contain mathematical and scientific data not relevant to the practising ophthalmologist. However, Cowey's paper on disturbances of stereopsis by brain damage is relevant, as is the paper by Jeannerod on the posterior parietal area as a spatial generator.

This book provides an update on recent neurophysiological and perceptual research, with a good bibliography at the end of each chapter. It is recommended to those with an interest in cerebral aspects of vision, but does not provide new avenues of benefit for our patients.

M D SANDERS

Everything You Need to Know About Your Eyes. By ROBERT YOUNGSON. Pp. 117. £2.50. Sheldon: London. 1985.

The nature and extent of misunderstanding and mythology about eyes and vision is so great that any effort to diminish them is to be welcomed. The number of texts devoted to this