BOOK REVIEWS


This is the first book to consider laser applications to the whole field of biology and medicine. It has several chapters on the basic ideas of lasers and their general biomedical uses, and these are followed by more specific accounts of laser action on various tissues and pathological conditions, notably cancers.

There are thirteen pages dealing with "Laser Effects on the Eye", and it is emphasized that the eye is the most sensitive part of the body to laser damage. A description of retinal laser damage is followed by mention of currently available ophthalmic lasers. A discussion of laser treatment of man stresses that only surgeons experienced with xenon arc coagulators should contemplate treating patients with the laser, and then only after practice on animals. The author looks to the future of ophthalmology and sees the need for research on a wide front to make certain laser application is safe and effective.

The book ends with a chapter on protection and another about planning a laser laboratory.


It is impossible to read this monograph without concluding that the application of ultrasound to clinical problems both diagnostic and therapeutic is still experimental. Much of the work reviewed is familiar, and standard accounts of A-scope and scanning techniques are given. The results clearly have some value in optics but one is unable to detect a critical note of the assessment of the medical value of diagnostic ultrasound, and one wonders how many cases need this investigation where the diagnosis is clinched by it or is obtainable by no other technique.

Perhaps the most impressive chapter in the work is that of the physicists describing the properties of an ultrasonic beam. This is punctuated by warnings of the possibilities of misinterpretation of oscilloscope appearances. These warnings, taken in combination with the discussion on artefacts in some of the clinical presentations, make rather discouraging reading.

Some of the more novel applications of ultrasound include a method for recording ocular blood flow, as yet on a somewhat tentative basis. It is surprising that no mention is made—if only perhaps to discuss it—of the therapeutic value claimed for ultrasonic vibration in myopia.

Considering the paucity of original material, and its slim size, the price of the work is excessive in spite of its being excellently produced.


This is a highly technical monograph which will be of interest to all interested in the welfare of the blind, but much of which the ordinary clinician will find difficult to assimilate. The author deals with his subject in the following chapters. (1) The need for Braille. (2) The market for Braille. (3) Sources of Braille. (4) The present methods and costs of producing Braille. (5) Technological advances in Braille production. (6) The effects of innovation on Braille production. (7) An approach to Braille system development.


This atlas is concerned with diagnostic techniques, choice of procedure, and surgical correction of retinal detachment. The text has been clearly written and is liberally illustrated with excellent line drawings.
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In the first section on diagnostic techniques emphasis is placed on the technique of indirect ophthalmoscopy, which is clearly described, as is the use of scleral depression, an aid which is frequently misunderstood and infrequently practised correctly.

A short didactic section on the various procedures available for the treatment of retinal detachments is followed by the major part of the atlas which describes in detail the methods of performing these various surgical procedures.

This book should be read by every ophthalmic resident as well as by ophthalmologists who perform only occasional retinal detachment operations. It can also be read with benefit by those well versed in detachment surgery. The descriptions of performing indirect ophthalmoscopy and the various surgical procedures are excellent and the text is filled with most useful tips on the minutiae of surgical technique. The line drawings are clear and apposite, but at times appear to take up more room than is really necessary, since the price of the book is so high. In spite of these minor criticisms this book can be thoroughly recommended and should be made available to all ophthalmic residents.


This is the third edition of what has become one of the standard textbooks in ophthalmology. The presentation of the book is unchanged but the text has been enlarged and brought up to date. It is eminently readable and can be thoroughly recommended.

Slit-lamp Examination of Vitreous and Retina. By K. Hruby, translated and edited by A. Posner. 1967. Pp. 130, 58 figs, bibl. Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore; Livingstone, Edinburgh. (£7 7s. 6d.)

This is a translation of Hruby’s monograph Spaltlampen-mikroskopie des hinteren Augenabschnitts published in 1950. The original text has been revised and the number of figures, particularly the colour plates, has been increased. [For a review of the original see Ophthalmic Literature (1950), 4, 416.]


Ever since the publication by Novotny and Alvis in 1961 on fluorescence fundus photography, this method has been extensively applied in ophthalmological research to amplify our knowledge of the disease processes of the retina, optic nerve, and to some extent of the choroid. The two authors, pioneers in this line of investigation, give a short introduction on the principles and go on to report their own researches based predominantly on ophthalmoscopic observation of the stained fundus. The question whether the new method can teach us more than is already known is enthusiastically answered in the affirmative: no other method could for example distinguish so clearly between a pseudo-neuritis and a neuritis of the optic nerve as fluorescence angiography does when, thanks to increased permeability of the vessels, as happens in inflammation, the dye enters the surrounding tissue. Similar considerations are relevant to the differentiation between degeneration and inflammation. Some startling ideas have been suggested in venous thrombosis which in the early stages is not an occlusion at all, and could thus well be amenable to treatment. Another example is the variable behaviour of the vessels in hypertension, angio-spastic retinopathy, and the like. From the therapeudic viewpoint, besides the significance in vascular obstruction mentioned above, indications for light-coagulation of areas of hæmorrhagic proneness (as in diabetic retinopathy) could be facilitated. As a summary of what has been achieved in the past 6 to 7 years and as a pointer to future possibilities in research, the monograph makes excellent reading. Many of the very instructive fundus photographs would have gained immensely had they been shown in colour.