

Book Review

Coding System for Disorders of the Eye. By J. SCHAPPERT-KIMMIJSER, A. COLENBRANDER, and S. FRANKEN. 1968. Pp. 206. Karger, Basel. (96s.)

This book describes a diagnostic code to replace that in the International Classification of Diseases. The code is built up by using the first two digits to describe the anatomical site of the lesion (*e.g.* 60 = orbit), the next to describe the type of lesion (injury, inflammation, etc.), and the fourth to amplify the description (*e.g.* 2 = oedema). The last two digits describe the specific aetiology when this is known.

Special codes are used for refractive errors, ocular movements, and disorders of visual function including pupillary abnormalities. Syndromes are arbitrarily coded using four digits.

Tables are given which illustrate the principles of the system of coding and the major part of the book consists of an alphabetical list of eye diseases with the relevant code numbers.

A satisfactory diagnostic code which is acceptable for international use is certainly required. Such a code must clearly differentiate all ocular conditions and at the same time remain sufficiently simple to encourage its use. The system devised by the authors fulfils the first criterion in most respects although the code for operations is inadequate. Its main disadvantage is its complexity. The principal divisions are logical, but the subdivisions contain so many special codes which could not be deduced by logic that it would be necessary for the user to refer to the Tables or Index for almost all but the most common diagnoses. This means that considerable time is required for the coding, perhaps not a great problem for a clinic with a small turnover of patients, but for a large eye hospital the time and expense involved might not be acceptable.

A great deal of hard work and ingenuity has gone into the compilation of this system, but unless it can be simplified, even with some sacrifice in exactitude, I doubt whether the code as it stands will gain general acceptance. The system has been recommended by the International Council of Ophthalmology and the International Federation of Ophthalmological Societies, and certainly justifies a trial in as many different eye departments as possible. Its value can only be judged by such a trial.

Note

International Council of Ophthalmology

Athens, April, 1969

The International Council of Ophthalmology met in Athens on April 23, 1969, under the presidency of Prof. J. Charamis. The Gonin Medal was awarded to Prof. K. Meyer-Schwickerath. The Council undertook the organization of the XXI International Congress of Ophthalmology to be held in Mexico in 1970, the study of information in ophthalmology, and the preparation of a perforated card for the Coding System of Eye Disorders, the standardization of tonometers, and the problem of contact lenses, for which a committee has been appointed.

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