

Manual of Tonography. By R. C. DREWS. 1971. Pp. 128, 89 figs, refs. Mosby, St. Louis; Kimpton, London. (£6.20)

The writer of this review holds some beliefs which are opposed to those of the author of this book, who states in his preface "To deny patients tonography is to set glaucoma care back 20 years". It has to be admitted, therefore, that the reviewer could not read the book without challenging the author to convert him from his disbelief, and it is to be hoped that the reviewer has not been unreasonably resistant to conversion.

The book starts off with a brief but interesting history of tonography, and this is followed by a short adequate account of the theory of tonography, including such matters as ocular rigidity. The basic errors of tonography are mentioned, mathematics being kept to a minimum—which is a good idea in a book concerned largely with clinical applications. It is pleasing to find that the routine correction of tonographical results for abnormal ocular rigidity is not recommended, because there is evidence that such corrections are not always valid.

There is a very useful section dealing with the equipment needed for tonography. This includes not only such obvious things as the various electronic tonometers and recorders, which are dealt with in some detail, but also other necessary items, such as something for the patient to lie on and something for the technician to sit on. These less obvious items are worth mentioning, because anyone who wants to do tonography properly will have to acquire everything that is needed, and the initial cost needs to be worked out carefully. Not only the money required has to be considered but also the space, and this point is also made. In fact, the author draws up a table of costs (unfortunately in dollars only) and makes no secret of the fact that a tonography unit is not cheap either to set up or to maintain and operate. His comments regarding the technician who is to use the equipment and do the tests are excellent; you must have somebody who is kind, intelligent and reliable. The section on the practice of tonography is clearly written and full of sound advice and is very useful not only to clinicians but also to the technicians who will do the tests.

In all the above respects this book is to be recommended, but, in the reviewer's opinion, it is disappointing when it comes to the problem of the clinical value of tonography as distinct from its undoubted value in research. As already mentioned, tonography is time-consuming expensive (even this book of 128 pages costs £6.20 in Britain). This would not matter if the procedure gave information of vital importance in the management of glaucoma patients and did not use up money and time which, with a limited budget, could perhaps be used on equipment and personnel for testing the visual fields. The author makes repeated statements about the clinical importance of tonography, but his assertions are not equalled in number by the items of factual evidence that tonography really does improve one's ability to diagnose glaucoma and really does prevent sight being lost in the long-term treatment of this condition. The author says that much evidence exists proving the value of tonography but he gives this evidence in general terms only.

The reviewer considers that the author should have devoted a section of this book to a critical and convincing review of this evidence because this would seem to be the best way of achieving the intention stated in the preface that "The purpose of this book is to help patients get better care".

Biochemistry of the Eye. Edited by C. N. GRAYMORE. 1970. Pp. 783, figs, tables refs. Academic Press, London. (£12)

This large volume consists of eight review articles written by ten authors, all authorities on their subject.

The cornea (D. M. Maurice and M. W. Riley), retina (C. N. Graymore), and lens (J. F. R. Kuck Jr.) are dealt with in a similar manner. The metabolism of the tissue is fully described together with the nature of the component proteins and enzymes, and any other substances which have attracted the attention of biochemists. The articles on the lens and retina also describe in detail the biochemical aspects of functional failure, cataracts, and retinal degeneration (hereditary and chemically-induced) respectively.