Much information about reading difficulties is given by the other specialists. Most of it is not of specific interest to ophthalmologist, and each specialist brings his frame of reference but with no indication which is the best. It is admitted that in practice the most dominant member of the team gives the treatment programme its direction. The educationist especially is very sceptical about the plethora of specialists involved; he sees children attended by a multitude of specialists from many disciplines with little help to the actual child. Often the school, which sees most of the child, and is intimately concerned with his skill in reading, is excluded from the remedial programme.

The term "dyslexia" is a very unsatisfactory one, as it implies that the condition is a disease based on the medical model, which can be diagnosed in terms of history, physical signs, laboratory tests, and treatment. In practice reading difficulty cuts across all these parameters. For example, social and economic factors are important; the condition tends to be limited almost exclusively to children from white middle-class homes where standard English is spoken. At present in the U.S.A., between 10 and 20 per cent. of such children have serious defects in reading ability.

This book presents the problem fairly well but in no way answers it, as the multiplicity of points of view does not produce a solution. The whole problem of reading disorders requires fundamental rethinking.


Diabetic retinopathy has claimed much attention from both ophthalmologists and physicians in recent years, and this is certainly justified since it is now the commonest cause of blindness in middle age in this country. A book that indicates the often controversial management available for this complicated condition is therefore welcome and refreshing. Although this volume appears to be large and is expensively produced, the text is, in fact, very short and easy to read.

The introductory chapter is excellent and the following chapter on the development of diabetic retinopathy, although controversial in parts, is certainly a useful attempt to understand the evolution of the diverse lesions involved.

In the chapter on classification, only the Airlie House and O'Hare classifications are given, both of which have proved unsatisfactory in many ways. Although it must be admitted that there is no entirely satisfactory method of classifying diabetic retinopathy, the value of other grading systems, especially those that have been used in practice, could perhaps have been indicated. There follows a chapter on medical therapy which, as far as it goes, is valuable and well documented, but perhaps reflects the fact that the book is written by ophthalmologists and not by physicians. The chapter on xenon photocoagulation reveals the long and wide experience of the authors and when read in conjunction with the stereoscopic photographs available in the folder at the back, it represents the most important part of the book. The stereoscopic photographs and the viewer are essential to the reader's understanding. In contrast, the black and white reproductions of colour photographs which form such a very large part of the book are often disappointing and hardly justify their space.

Argon laser photocoagulation is dealt with in an honest and undramatic manner, but the chapter on pituitary ablation lacks the scholarly precision that is evident in some of the earlier chapters. Not all ophthalmologists would agree with the chapter on retinal detachment in diabetes, since it may not be felt that the results obtained justify the trauma involved. However, it is gratifying to read that it may be best to watch localized retinal detachment not affecting the macula in cases of diabetic retinopathy, since these may remain localized for a very long time. Vitreous surgery is hardly mentioned, but this can sometimes give excellent results in improving visual acuity.

The final chapter summarizing the indications for the various forms of treatment reflects the wide experience and common sense of the authors. While the ultimate answer to diabetic retinopathy undoubtedly lies in the hands of endocrinologists, ophthalmologists still have to deal with the present position as they find it, and as a practical guide this book is to be highly recommended.