Correspondence

Microfilariae in the cornea

To the Editor of the British Journal of Ophthalmology

Sir,—Further to the interesting letter by Dr. J. Anderson and Mr. H. Fuglsang in the September issue, it is wrong to say that the presence of living larvae in the cornea has been overlooked in previous surveys. In 1952 to 1956 in West Africa I did not have the advantage of a modern slit lamp. I had a 1952 AIMARK and with this a special pair of objectives which raised the magnification to ×40. This was too powerful and only gave one the idea that there might be living, moving microfilaria in the cornea. In my book ‘Blindness in West Africa’ (1959), p. 203, I describe how I excised sixteen pieces of cornea from different patients in whom I suspected the presence of Mf. volvulus. I was wrong in seven instances and correct in nine. Eight of the larvae lay between the epithelium and Bowman’s membrane and one under Bowman’s membrane. In the seven cases in which no larvae were found, Bowman’s membrane was not damaged and they may have been present in the deeper structure. I shall never forget watching these living Mf. volvulus pushing their way through the corneal tissue under the light microscope. They appeared to make very heavy weather of it. I also described this at a meeting of the WHO Expert Committee. There has never been any doubt that living Mf. volvulus may exist in the cornea, but it is only natural that with better optical instruments they will be more easily spotted to-day.

Yours faithfully,
F. C. RODGER

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References

Book reviews


This monograph, written jointly by a clinician and a physicist, sets out to explain the physical basis of the transparency of ocular tissues and the effects of scattered light within the eye under normal conditions and where turbidity of the normally transparent tissues is increased by pathological conditions affecting the regularity of their constituents.

The book is well printed on good quality paper and illustrated with high quality electron micrographs and photographs from the Howe Laboratory together with clearly presented diagrams.

A number of the physical concepts in relation to glare which are introduced may be new to the clinician, and may be of value to the researcher interested in visual problems who may not be well versed in ‘noise’ theory as it affects vision. Some practical points in relation to the testing of vision in patients affected by glare are given and possibly useful techniques for the alleviation of glare are suggested. The book ends with a prophetic look at the possible use of a holographic technique for cancelling out the scattering of light in cataract, so alleviating visual loss from this cause.
The book summarizes much clinical, anatomical, neurophysiological, and physical work, and references to all its sources are fully quoted. It may be recommended as interesting reading to anyone working in the visual sciences.


This booklet has been written by the neurologist of a large Berlin Hospital. It is based on the investigation of clinical and post mortem cases using modern methods, especially angiography. The experience of the author will encourage the use of carotid ligation in suitable cases of fistulae of the cavernous sinus, cerebral angioma, and haemorrhage. The brain can tolerate diminution of its blood supply by between 39 and 50% without serious ischaemic damage, but the maintenance of a collateral blood flow in the circle of Willis is important. Ligature of the vertebral arteries below their confluence is also well tolerated, but this tolerance is reduced by arteriosclerotic, hypertonic, and diabetic changes in the arteries. The author presents a constructive and informative view of the indications and results of the ligation of one or more of the afferent cerebral arteries.


This book consists of a series of review articles written by the staff of the Department of Ophthalmology of the University of Iowa. All are very readable and up-to-date, and well reflect the title "Current Concepts". The chapters on central serous retinopathy and echo-ophthalmology are outstanding, with full bibliographies. The last two reviews, concerned with health care and medical education, and information systems in ophthalmology, provide food for thought on topics which are becoming increasingly important in modern practice.

Other topics covered include fluorescein angiography, ophthalmic aspects of myeloma and glaucoma, diagnostic pupillary drug tests, physiological retinal function tests, contact lens management, orbital tumours, antibiotic therapy in ophthalmology, and cysts of the lids. This book can be recommended to all practising ophthalmologists and ophthalmic residents.


This atlas on the ultrastructure of the eye in health and disease consists of selected electron micrographs, mostly from recent Japanese journals, presented, as the authors claim, to make "Japanese treasures" available to foreign colleagues who have been restricted by the language barrier.

However, the inconsistency of terminology used in the short and inexplicit legends which occupy only a fraction of the left-hand page and the large electron micrographs on the facing page (many unlabelled, with little detail of the plane of section, precise location of the area selected, and, in some instances, the source of material) are hardly likely to promote the authors' aim. Indeed, while the novice may be excused for finding this book a maze, it may even puzzle experienced electron microscopists. There are too many electron micrographs on some subjects while others are barely mentioned. The quality of reproduction of the micrographs ranges from fair to excellent, but the heavy glossy paper and hard-back binding enhance the book's aesthetic value. It is an attempt to fill the gap for a much-needed atlas dealing with normal, experimental, and pathological anatomy of the eye, but prospective buyers should be warned that it does not always fulfil this aim.


This Atlas is arranged in two sections. The first deals with conventional radiography of the orbit