Book reviews


Like several of its predecessors in this series, this book comprises a collection of articles on a variety of subjects. Three papers deal with contact lenses: Aquavella reviews the present role of hydrophilic lenses and provides a comprehensive list of references; there is a short paper by Enoch on the use of soft lenses, together with a list of inverted telescope units used in the correction of uniconal aphakia. The third is a longer paper by Gernet on the value of combined contact lens correction for unilateral aphakia which has advantages over the more conventional type of aphakic correction, and the optical principles underlying this type of lens prescription are dealt with in depth.

There is an interesting article by Tenner demonstrating the value of fluorescein angiography in the study of the glaucomatous optic disc, although the author concedes that the technique is not suited to routine diagnosis.

In the remaining two papers there is a discussion on pneumatonography by Langham, Leydhecker, and their associates as part of a collaborative study between centres in Baltimore and Wurzburg. The studies investigated postural changes in intraocular pressures which show significant differences in normal and glaucomatous eyes.

The last article by Zingirian discusses ocular pemphigus with several case presentations describing the disease and its treatment.

The criticism that has been levelled against this series still applies. Although there is no question of the high standard of the individual contributions, particularly in this volume, each subject is very specialized and therefore the book is likely to have only a limited appeal. Sadly also, the fact that three of the six articles are in German, restricts the amount of information that can be derived by the average English-speaking ophthalmologist.

T. J. FFYTCHE


At a time when a number of instruments have become available for vitreous surgery and the development of this method of treatment is being actively pursued, it is of particular interest that a book should be published in which a large section is devoted to vitreous surgery, including a description of the use of an instrument developed by one of the authors.

The chapters on uveal and vitreous surgery start with a short consideration of the anatomy of the respective structures and with a discussion of the diseases. In considering uveal surgery attention is largely devoted to management of malignant melanoma of the iris, ciliary body, and choroid. Modern techniques of conservative treatment are fully discussed. In the chapter on vitrectomy the use of the vitrophage for lensectomy and in the treatment of vitreous disease is considered in sufficient detail to provide the reader with adequate practical information about the techniques.

The last section is devoted to the treatment of endophthalmitis. Several antibiotics are described and the more important ones are discussed with particular reference to their effectiveness when given by the intravitreal route. The duration of their activity and possible toxic effects are also discussed. This chapter is particularly valuable for the detailed manner in which each drug is considered. The technique of intravitreal injection, an important factor in avoiding adverse effects, is fully described.

Each section of the book includes a full and up-to-date list of references. The text is well illustrated and the pictures have excellent captions.

This is a book which is written by authors who have practical experience in the field of which they write. It should make equally helpful reading for both the postgraduate student and the practising consultant.

JAMES R. HUDSON


This book traces the care of the blind from earliest times to the present day. Among primitive peoples, the blind, like other physically handicapped persons, were often killed. Many famous people in early times were blind, including Homer, but a large proportion of blind persons had to sustain themselves by begging. In early Christian times blindness was regarded as a punishment for some misdemeanour and was in fact inflicted as a punitive measure in some cases. The family looked after their blind persons. The Jewish people always tried to mitigate the bitter fate of the blind. During the Middle Ages hospitals for the blind were opened in Europe and some public responsibility for their care became manifest. In the seventeenth century some blind individuals acquired education and showed outstanding achievements in various fields of endeavour. Provision of work for the blind came to be recognized as necessary and there was some advance in the means of communication among the blind. The first school for blind children was founded in 1784 by Valentin Härg. Raised print was introduced and was useful in teaching, and this school prepared blind children for employment.

The introduction of an embossed dot alphabet by Louis Braille was a great advance. Many new schools for the blind were opened in the early nineteenth century.

The next stage evolved as a recognition that blind