Book reviews


These transactions contain a remarkable mixture of papers of widely differing value. In addition to the Bieclowsky lecture of Professor Harms the main sections are on amblyopia, electrophysiology, vertical strabismus, and prism therapy. The terminology is often Continental. Some of the papers are so esoteric and compressed as to be incomprehensible without a good working knowledge of recent trends, particularly in the theory and practice of the management of anomalous sensory responses. The book is therefore not one for the unguided general ophthalmic surgeon.

Nevertheless, many of the 57 papers are of great value, and there is something for everyone interested in strabismology. A selection from these papers must necessarily be a personal one, but all who are interested in the basic mechanisms involved in squint will appreciate those by Harms (anomalous sensory processes), Flynn (neuropsychology of suppression), Von Noorden (experimental amblyopia), Thomas and Spielmann (false anisometropia), and Hamburger (cortical after-images). The section on electrophysiology has a number of distinguished papers, especially those from Robinson and Scott. There are extremely valuable practical papers for the surgeon from, among others, Hugonnier (reinforcing previous warnings about the late complications of the correction of superior oblique palsy), Hardisty (superior oblique tucking), Knapp (dissociated vertical deviations), Dunlap (double elevator under-action), Hiles and Manley (vertical incomitance in A—pattern exotropia), and Ferrer (general fibrosis syndrome). The strabismus surgeon and the orthoptist will gain useful insight into current thinking from the sections on amblyopia treatment and prism therapy. There is more than sufficient here to make this book essential in any library concerned with strabismus management.

A. Stanworth


It is appropriate that this book should appear now, as it will not only condense and clarify the many changes and advances but also enlarge the horizons of persons interested in the subject. The book is comprehensive, being divided into many small chapters written by different authors. Unfortunately, some of these leave the reader at a loss, and he is unable to determine exactly what the writer intended. Happily such failings are rare.

The book starts with a valuable explanatory section on 'physical fundamentals' and a glossary which is of value to the student before he proceeds to the large portion devoted to malignant melanoma. Radiopharmaceuticals are comprehensively covered, while the application of radioactivity in the diagnosis of conditions other than neoplasia is superb. This book fully deserves to be read by all working on its topic.


Ultrasoundography is becoming an increasingly valuable diagnostic procedure in the examination of the eye and orbit. This volume discusses the physical principles of ultrasound and the instrumentation. There are much wider applications of the technique in general medicine and neurology; the section on the ophthalmic use is short and is concerned more with principles than clinical practice.

This monograph contains much technical information and is intended for those working in the field of ultrasonography rather than for the practising ophthalmologist.

T. J. Fytche


Norman Bier began contact lens practice at a time when scleral hard lenses were the only ones available. His first textbook covered the practice of hard corneal and scleral lenses, in which he was a pioneer; they were used extensively in the 1950s and 1960s. We therefore welcome this updated text on contact lens practice, which has Gerald Lowther as a co-author. It is best to review this book as a new text, since only a few chapters contain material from the previous book by Bier.

The chief section deals with basic principles, haptic contact lenses, corneal contact lenses, flexible (soft) lenses, and special lenses and procedures. The textbook covers in its 500-odd pages the whole of contact lens practice, and is therefore thoroughly comprehensive. But for a few exceptions the illustrations are of good quality and well chosen. There is an imbalance in style and attitudes which is evidently due to some chapters being mostly the work of one author. This becomes apparent in the use of references. Thus some chapters are well referenced and others poorly so—to the extent that no credits are given to work that has appeared in well-known publications on contact lenses. While this will be a source of annoyance for serious students of contact lens practice, it will not detract from the book's value to those experienced practitioners who will use it solely as reference.

There are several tables available, but in this age of small convenient calculators one doubts the value of the many detailed tables.
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From the ophthalmologist's point of view the area devoted to pathological conditions may be considered deficient, but since the text is written by optometrists and will essentially be used by optometrists this omission will not seriously restrict the use of the text by many people concerned with contact lenses. The printing is good, the lay-out clear, and the editing careful. This textbook can be recommended as a basic text for all those wishing to learn the practice of contact lenses.

MONTAGUE RUBEN


This book, according to the introduction by Stephen Miller, 'Has held to the general plan of providing clear illustrations of practical details backed up by captions as short as possible', and indeed for the most part the 25 contributors have observed this principle. The result is a really practical book which will enable the reader to grasp the main stages of the particular operation described in a remarkably short time. The illustrations are on the whole absolutely first-class, and the number given to each caption corresponds precisely to the illustration bearing the same number, but some contributors have put too much detail in their captions and an insufficient number of illustrations, and sometimes the relation of the caption to the illustration is not quite clear. There is also some overlapping and repetition which could be avoided, as in the use of the cryoprobe in cataract extraction (p. 61 and also p. 142).

Apart from the description of operations the book includes useful articles on akinesia and local anaesthesia, general anaesthesis, the localisation of foreign bodies in the eye, dacrocystography, and orbital venography. On p. 144 application of the cryoprobe is recommended for 7 seconds during the procedure of cyclocryotherapy. Although there is a wide variability in practice, most surgeons prefer a longer period of application.

This is a most valuable book and one which will be of great use to the practising eye surgeon who wants to get information quickly not only about surgical technique but also about indications for operation and aftercare. It can be thoroughly recommended.

T. KEITH LYLE


There are certain obligations that a really expensive textbook should fulfil. It must provide definitive information on the subject under discussion; it must collect together and interpret contemporary knowledge, setting it out in an instructive and logical manner; it must create guidelines for the diagnosis and therapy of the conditions it describes; and it must fill the role of a standard reference book. Lastly, its presentation and illustrations should be of the highest quality. In summary it should be better than any other contemporary volume on the subject. Judged by these standards Fundus Fluorescein Angiography, costing £100, falls short of the mark.

The book is built around a series of 100 colour transparencies consisting of 6 reproductions of colour photographs or fluorescein angiogram slides on each transparency. A comprehensive variety of fundus conditions is demonstrated. The photographs are of good quality, and although a certain amount of detail has obviously been lost in their reproduction they illustrate the fundus pathology adequately. It is in the text that the shortcomings of this volume are most evident. Each slide is accompanied by a case report, a description of the salient features of the photographs and angiogram, and a brief comment on the disease.

What is sadly lacking in a book of this calibre is any serious attempt to discuss the diseases in depth, with little emphasis on the pathogenesis and no guidelines on treatment. There seem to be few advantages in this form of presentation using slides over the more conventional fluorescein atlases. Indeed there are predictable disadvantages in that the slides may become damaged in time or lost. In practice, most ophthalmologists undertaking fluorescein angiography will have their own set of diagnostic slides, whereas those learning the subject will gain as much information from the cheaper conventional atlases where the reproduction of the illustrations is better and the text more comprehensive.

However, this book could well have a place in postgraduate and undergraduate teaching, and despite the general criticisms Dr Schatz is to be congratulated on his excellent selection of slides.

T. J. FFYTCHE

Notes

Contributions to BJO

In future contributions intended for publication in the British Journal of Ophthalmology should be addressed to the Editor, British Journal of Ophthalmology, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR. For further instructions see inside of the front cover.

References in BJO

The attention of contributors is drawn to the style in which references should be set out. Instructions appear on the inside of the front cover. 1977 has been a year of transition to the new style, and from the beginning of 1978 all papers will be required to conform to it.