

and sources of vitamin A, and the precipitating effects of measles and diarrhoea on xerophthalmia. Corneal xerosis and ulceration are associated with severe protein-energy malnutrition and precipitating illnesses and show a peak incidence between 6 months and 3 years, while conjunctival xerosis does not have these associations and has a peak incidence of 3 to 6 years.

The longest section of the book deals with the formulation of effective intervention programmes. Dr Sommer suggests that an outside expert may make an important contribution to this process by visiting and making records at selected sites and interacting with local public health and medical personnel and nutritionists. Such preliminary studies may permit a rational approach to the mounting of complex, expensive, and time-consuming prevalence surveys. Dr Sommer lays down objective, clinical, and biochemical parameters for the diagnosis of xerophthalmia, and outlines the identification of populations at risk, sample size, and stratification of sampling, as well as the personnel involved for such studies, the data to be collected, and its subsequent analysis.

The final sections deal with treatment and prevention. Oral retinol palmitate or acetate (200 000 IU) is indicated immediately on diagnosis and repeated on the following day. Additional doses are given 1 to 2 weeks later and more frequently in severe protein-energy malnutrition until the protein status improves. Where oral treatment is impracticable, the parenteral route is used giving the water-miscible retinol palmitate (100 000 IU). This treatment is combined with the management of dietary deficiency and intercurrent illness. Indeed recurrence can be prevented only if mothers can modify diet to increase the content of vitamin A from inexpensive sources, such as mango, papaya, carrots, and dark-green leafy vegetables. Some emphasis is rightly laid on re-education of communities at risk in the use of foodstuffs, often abundant sources of provitamin A, based on a knowledge of local conditions. The problems of periodic dosing schedules of either infants at risk or potential mothers and of fortification programmes are also discussed.

This publication is already no doubt familiar to nutritionists and public health workers concerned with Third World countries. Every ophthalmologist should take the opportunity of reading it and it will no doubt stimulate many ophthalmologists in training to interest themselves in the possibilities of preventive ophthalmology. The guide is well printed and lavishly illustrated with coloured clinical photographs of the various stages of vitamin A deficiency. This is a particularly valuable feature which will no doubt be of great help to field workers.

ANTHONY J. BRON

## Notes

### Genetics meeting in Ghent

The International Society for Genetic Eye Diseases will hold the 1984 meeting in Ghent, Belgium, on 12-13 May under the auspices of the University of Ghent. Topics include: hereditary optic nerve diseases, mandibulofacial dysostoses, corneal and anterior chamber anomalies, and retinitis pigmentosa, gyrate atrophy, vitreoretinal degenerations. Further details from Professor Jules François, Graaf de Smet de Naeyerplein 15, B9000, Ghent, Belgium.

### European Strabismological Association

The 14th meeting of the European Strabismological Association (ESA) will take place in Copenhagen 18-20 May 1984 as a satellite congress to the VIIth Congress of the European Society of Ophthalmology in Helsinki on 21-25 May 1984. The main topic will be: mechanical aspects influencing squint surgery. Free papers will be accepted. Further details from the ESA Congress Office, Eye Department, Rigshospitalet, 9 Blegdamsvej, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark.

### Abstracts from *BJO*

The Commonwealth Mycological Institute announces that papers published in the *BJO* are regularly abstracted in the *Review of Medical and Veterinary Mycology*.

### Neuro-ophthalmology meeting

The 6th Meeting of the International Society of Neuro-ophthalmology and the 7th Congress of the Study Group of Neuro-ophthalmology and Neurogenetics of the World Federation of Neurology will hold a joint meeting in Antwerp, Belgium, on 14-18 May 1984. Details from Professor A. Neetens, Academic Hospital, University of Antwerp, Wilrijkstraat 10, 2520 Edegem, Belgium.

### Correction

In the paper entitled 'Candida endophthalmitis in a heroin addict: a case report,' by J. F. Salmon, Betty M. Partridge, and D. J. Spalton (*BJO* 1983; 67: 306-9) the dose for 5-fluorocytosine should have been given as 150 mg/kg/day instead of 150 mg/day, and the dose for ketoconazole should have been given as 200 mg/day instead of 200 mg/kg/day.