Book reviews


This is an excellent book by two well known authors, and is to be recommended for those who wish to acquire an understanding of the neodymium-YAG laser and its clinical application. It is divided into two sections, the first covering laser fundamentals, optical breakdown, photodisruption, laser tissue interaction and the eye, and instrumentation. The second part discusses the clinical applications for both the anterior and posterior segments. The chapters on capsulotomy, pupillary membranes, and intraocular lenses are excellent. However, it is a shame that there is not equal coverage of iris procedures, especially as for most ophthalmologists capsulotomy and iridotomy are the commonest indications for YAG therapy. This may be because iridotomy in the USA is still investigational. A further criticism is that there is no mention of corneal endothelial damage, seen especially with increasing number of pulses and higher energy levels.

This is a clear well laid out book that makes essential reading for those embarking on the rapidly expanding field of YAG laser microsurgery.

J D Jagger


This latest Recent Advances in Ophthalmology contains very well selected topics which are currently the subject of research and discussion in ophthalmology. Seventeen authors from the UK and the USA (with one exception, Professor Eisner, of Berne, Switzerland) cover therapy of herpes simplex, anterior chamber surgery, viscoelastic substances, radial keratotomy, intraocular lenses, congenital cataract, ocular phototoxicity, vitreous surgery, diabetic retinopathy, malignant melanomas, macular disease, glaucoma, and laser trabeculoplasty.

The illustrations are entirely black-and-white but of a high quality and well laid out with clear print. Each section usually provides a short introduction providing interesting background leading to the present advance in the subject. It is always satisfactory to be reminded that most advances in science are by gradual evolution. This evolutionary aspect is discussed in the section on intraocular lenses, but it is disappointing that this section has so little detail on complications, which are listed rather than given evaluation. Anterior segment surgery includes refractive keratoplasty and corneoscleral grafting, which has received wide attention in the ophthalmic literature. Pterygium surgical techniques are also included, but the equally important post-operative management, especially with topical steroids, gets no mention.

The selection of topics has been very good, and all practising ophthalmologists will find much to interest them. Of necessity there are a fair number of open ends in the topics discussed, but this adds to the value of the book and provides ideas for future advances. The references at the end of each section are full and again may lead the reader to further literature search.

James L. Kennerley Bankes


This book consists of lists of differential diagnosis set out in order of tissues or function involved, together with a short section of general signs and symptoms. There is an initial list of section headings, and each section begins with a list of subjects. While most lists are compiled with headings only, there are occasional remarks and even more rarely tables to assist in differential diagnosis. Each list is followed by references to the relevant ophthalmic literature.

Clearly this is a reference book to consult in times of difficulty. The text will appeal strongly to some readers, but others will find the unevenness of treatment and apparently capricious compilation of the lists irritating. The American terminology is also at times confusing. Much of the information can be obtained from standard works of reference, but some of the lists concerning symptoms or signs which cut across the systematic consideration of disease are very valuable.

This is not a book for the beginner, but an aide-memoire for the practising ophthalmologist, though having identified the possible diagnoses he will need in most cases to consult other sources for information about their differentiation. One of the most useful features is the full listing of drugs capable of producing each particular symptom or sign as a toxic effect. Certainly opinions will differ about the inclusions and exclusions from the lists. But then all lists of diagnoses are to some extent artificial and their bounds a question of semantics.

Perhaps the best understanding of the work, which is clearly the result of immense labour, is found in the author’s preface; ‘Material for this book has been used in computer systems to assist the ophthalmologist.’

D W Hill


This slim book with plastic bindings has as its objective the introduction of the ophthalmologist to computer technology. It contains chapters on the history of computers and how they work. Advice is given on the choice and purchase of the type of machine that might be of use to the ophthalmologist in a professional rather than a domestic capacity. The facilities offered by such common application packages as word processing, database, and spreadsheets are fully described.

This is a useful book and a reasonable start for any ophthalmologist seeking to become better acquainted with computers.

D J Powell


This short volume has chapters by several authors covering some important topics on herpes simplex infections of the eye. The first and last chapters are particularly useful, giving
conceise and contemporary analysis of the eye disease and management. My only criticism is that I would have expected more basic science as far as the virus itself was concerned and the antiviral agents used. Apart from this I found the book very readable, interesting, and informative. Priced at £37, it is within the grasp of most ophthalmologists.

RONALD J MARSH


In a manual devoted to teaching the art of contact lens fitting every picture is worth a dozen lines of writing. This beautifully produced atlas contains 497 excellent photographs to compliment the short and incisive text, making this a highly recommendable addition to the ophthalmologist's library. Indeed one would hope that it also became compulsory reading for all contact lens practitioners in training. The theory and practice of contact lens fitting are illustrated step by step, and at times a picture is repeated in order to emphasize a point of technique. The text has been kept to a minimum, yet it is comprehensive and didactic. It is hard to find any fault with this useful book, and an English translation would prove very popular.

T J FFYTCH


The 102nd volume of the on-going series 'Bucherei des Augenarztes' is devoted to an evaluation of refractometers, with special attention being paid to an automatic infrared machine. The mathematical and optical principles of refractometers are discussed fully together with the results of tests on model eyes. The text is very technical and likely to have only a limited appeal to clinical ophthalmologists.

In this long series of textbooks, many of which can be enthusiastically recommended, volume 102 will not feature highly in the popularity stakes.

T J FFYTCH

Notes

Herpetic eye diseases

The International Conference on Herpetic Eye Diseases will be held at Lake Tahoe, California on 6-8 September 1986. The topics include experimental and clinical studies of eye infections with herpes simplex virus, varicella zoster virus, cytomegalovirus, and E-B virus in the areas of virology, pathogenesis, latency, immunity, antiviral chemotherapy, interferon, and clinical management. Deadline for abstracts is 5 April 1986. Further information from C R Dawson or J O Oh, Francis I Proctor Foundation, Room S-315, University of California, San Francisco, California 94143, USA.

Cataract congress

The Welsh cataract congress will be held on 11-13 September 1986 at the Cullen Eye Institute, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas. Further details from Eula Mae Childs, Cullen Eye Institute, Baylor College of Medicine, I Baylor Plaza, Houston, Texas 77030, USA.

Sixth International Orthoptic Congress

The sixth International Orthoptic Congress will be held at the Harrogate Conference Centre, Harrogate, England on 29 June to 2 July 1987. Further information from the Secretary, British Orthoptic Society, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HX.

Ophthalmic prize

The third Ludwig von Sallman prize will be awarded at the 7th International Congress of Eye Research to be held on 25 September-1 October 1986 at the Nagoya Kanko Hotel, Nagoya, Japan. This award is for an outstanding achievement in ophthalmology and vision. The recipient will be determined by a committee composed of Dr Christina Enroth-Cugell, Dr Edward Norton, Dr Peter Gouras, and Dr Henry Wagner. Further information and nomination forms obtainable from: Peter Gouras, MD, Chairman of the von Sallman Prize Committee, Columbia University, Box 18, 630 West 168 Street, New York, New York 10032, USA.