

Book reviews

Guide to an Effective Outpatient Ophthalmic Surgical Center. Edited by STEPHEN P GINSBERG. Pp. 250. £37.75. SLACK: New Jersey. 1985.

There can be few ophthalmologists working this side of the Atlantic who remain unaware of recent changes in the delivery of surgical care and the virtual imposition of outpatient ophthalmic surgery in the United States. The underlying reasons for change are less obvious, but in the American medical market place costs have escalated to a level unacceptable to the consumer and the reimbursement insurance agencies. The fundamental changes affecting surgical practice have to a large extent overtaken our American colleagues, prompting the publication of this manual aimed at the practitioner wishing to move with the times and establish his own outpatient surgical facility.

The editor has gathered together contributions from 26 authors wedded to the concepts and the practice of outpatient ophthalmic surgery. The introduction reviews briefly the history of outpatient surgery and sets out the advantages to the patient, the ophthalmologist, and society as a whole but with no mention of the possible disadvantages. The ground rules and basic requirements for establishing a personal surgical base are outlined, with the aim of a cost effective service, particularly for the care provider. The advice given to engage an experienced business consultant and simultaneously consult one's attorney and accountant neatly captures the ethos of many of the subsequent contributions. The remainder of the text deals with subjects as diverse as federal and state regulations, reimbursement and certification, and the construction and equipping of the multimillion dollar edifice. There are a number of interesting contributions concerning public relations and marketing, promotion of the service, and guidelines for the day-to-day running of the so-called ambulatory facility. An absorbing account is given of the medicolegal implications of outpatient surgery and that of professional liability, with some revealing statistics.

On first impression this manual would seem to have little to offer the British ophthalmologist working in the public or perhaps private sector. Many interesting issues are, however, raised, particularly in the areas of cost containment and budgeting as well as providing an insight into aspects of contemporary practice in the United States. A number of contributions are worth perusing and appear eminently relevant to the revised management structure of the National Health Service. Perhaps this book will ultimately become essential reading for those who elect to take on an extended managerial role or become a clinical budget holder.

R J COOLING

Atlas of Clinical Ophthalmology. By D. J. SPALTON, R A HITCHINGS, P A HUNTER. Pp. 331. £60.00. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1984.

This extremely handsome volume is an introduction to clinical ophthalmology and an illustrated reference work. It is designed to show the type of clinical material encountered in general ophthalmic practice and the eye as a reflection of

disease elsewhere. It is beautifully illustrated, and it is nicely broken down into chapters on different aspects of eye disease, the format being basically the same throughout. On the whole the balance of the chapters is good, though some do contain more specialised details than others. I particularly liked the large numbers of pathology pictures alongside those of the clinical disease, and there are many x-rays, CT scans, ultrasound scans, and fluorescein angiograms where relevant. Another excellent feature was that parallel with any complicated photograph there was an accurate line diagram clarifying the more complicated features.

My only criticism of the book is the rather confusing layout of the print. It is arranged in two columns, and sometimes it is not clear when to switch from one to the other.

I would strongly recommend the book to all ophthalmologists, and despite its cost I consider it offers excellent value for money. It certainly should be purchased by all hospitals with eye surgeons in training.

RONALD J MARSH

Brain Mechanisms and Spatial Vision. Eds. DAVID J. INGLE, MARC JEANNEROD, DAVID N. LEE. Pp. 470. £44.50. Martinus Nijhoff: Dordrecht, Netherlands. 1985.

This book results from a NATO Advanced Study Institute held in June 1983. The aim was to provide a forum for discussion between workers concerned with perception and those interested in electrophysiology. The rapid advance in our understanding of the neurophysiology of vision following the work of Hubel and Weisel has not been closely correlated with the behavioural output of given species of cortical detectors. The assembled 17 authors addressed themselves to these problems, and the book was edited by representatives from America, France, and Britain. The majority of papers were on aspects of visual perception and in particular depth perception, three dimensional vision, and their relations to movement. The opening chapter, on visual timing of interceptive action, discusses the visual aspects of catching a ball and the relationship of visual input to muscle skeletal co-ordination. Practical applications were studying the performance of crossing traffic and assessing the gaps between cars. Many papers contain mathematical and scientific data not relevant to the practising ophthalmologist. However, Cowey's paper on disturbances of stereopsis by brain damage is relevant, as is the paper by Jeannerod on the posterior parietal area as a spatial generator.

This book provides an update on recent neurophysiological and perceptual research, with a good bibliography at the end of each chapter. It is recommended to those with an interest in cerebral aspects of vision, but does not provide new avenues of benefit for our patients.

M D SANDERS

Everything You Need to Know About Your Eyes. By ROBERT YOUNGSON. Pp. 117. £2.50. Sheldon: London. 1985.

The nature and extent of misunderstanding and mythology about eyes and vision is so great that any effort to diminish them is to be welcomed. The number of texts devoted to this

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end has recently multiplied, possibly owing to the widespread desire for further knowledge engendered among lay persons by the media. The present work covers the topic in an interesting and readable manner, and, while there are matters of emphasis with which there will always be some debate, the majority of topics are well and accurately covered. It is unlikely that the practising ophthalmologist will find himself at odds with what is stated. The language is appropriately non-technical, though the old difficulty of analogies of eyes with cameras, in this case a television camera, arises because one wonders in fact how many lay people do know how a camera works, let alone an electronic one.

Certainly this reviewer would be very happy to know that his patients had read this book, and perhaps even happier if he could be sure that the general practitioner and primary health care personnel had also done so.

M J GILKES

Ophthalmology. 2nd revised edition. By FRITZ HOLLWICH. Pp. 363. DM 29.80. Georg Thieme Verlag: Stuttgart. 1985.

This concise textbook of 363 pages provides an excellent basic introduction to ophthalmology. Despite its relatively small size it contains an immense amount of ophthalmic information, presented in a lucid and succinct manner and in an eminently readable form. The book is well organised, with introductory chapters on ocular and adnexal anatomy and physiology. Succeeding chapters systematically describe diseases of the various components of the eye, the ocular adnexae, and the orbit. Chapters are also devoted to glaucoma, strabismus, and disorders of the visual pathways, and useful sections are included on the eye and systemic disease and rehabilitation of the blind.

The information is clearly and logically presented and superbly illustrated by a wealth of line diagrams, schematic representations, and black-and-white photographs of quite exceptional quality. In addition, there are 73 colour figures which illustrate key ophthalmic disorders and occasionally form part of very informative and pertinent case presentations. The ophthalmic information is up to date, and modern therapeutic options and modalities are included in most chapters. Each chapter is followed by a short summary, and, although this is useful to some degree, there is considerable duplication of information, which is probably unnecessary in a book of this size.

In my opinion this is one of the best introductory ophthalmic textbooks and is ideally suited to medical students and those entering specialty training in ophthalmology. It is also enthusiastically recommended for general practitioners or physicians wishing to update their knowledge on current ophthalmic practice.

DESMOND B ARCHER

Cromwell's Glasses. By HOLLY KELLER. Pp. 28. £4.95. Julia MacRae: London. 1985.

Some of the simplest things give the greatest pleasure, and messages written in simple fashion tend to be more powerful. This little book for small children deals with the emotional problems of a young rabbit who has to wear

glasses. It is based on the premise that children who are myopic and do not have to wear glasses tend to be clumsy and unpopular, whereas once they wear glasses the world is all the better for them. As most ophthalmologists know, very many spectacles are inappropriately prescribed for children and often are only necessary for use in the classroom and only rarely for continual use. Clumsiness can rarely be ascribed to myopia.

While some of the rabbits drawn in the book looked like rabbits, the unfortunate victim rabbit, Cromwell, who is to have to wear glasses, had a bifid face (as did several of his relatives), and I suspect that this is the clue to the underlying brain malformation which accounted for the clumsiness and visual defect rather than a need for glasses.

The book is harmless, quite amusing, but not exactly a must for every paediatric ophthalmologist to have on the shelf of his waiting room.

DAVID TAYLOR

Virus Disease of the Eye. By D. L. EASTY. Pp. 350. £30.00. Lloyd-Luke: London. 1985.

This monumental work gives an authoritative, clear account of the types of virus that affect the eye, their structure, and the laboratory techniques used in their detection. There is a good account of the clinical conditions produced by the different viruses, and a comprehensive discussion of the possible mechanism by which the different clinical signs have been caused and the management of each clinical entity. The in-depth discussion of the relevant literature is interesting, unbiased, and highly informative.

The main criticism of the book is that, with such a detailed text, it is sometimes difficult to isolate the relevant facts and obtain a clear concept of the management of a particular disease. This problem could have been overcome by the use of tables of clinical signs and their management, and a summary at the end of each chapter.

There are one or two omissions or small criticisms. For instance in herpes simplex infection the text does not tell how to distinguish between active herpes simplex corneal ulceration and the breakdown of an inert ulcer to cause a recurrent erosion. The management of these two clinical conditions is entirely different. These, though, are minor points and do not detract from the overall excellence of the book. It is well written, highly informative, and should be on the shelves of all eye hospitals, libraries, available to anybody with an interest in ocular infection. It is highly recommended.

JAMES I. MCGILL

Basic Clinical Ophthalmology. By CALBERT I PHILLIPS. Pp. 256. £10.95. Pitman: London. 1984.

This paperback book is described as for the general practitioner and medical student and as an introduction to ophthalmology residents beginning in the specialty. Seventeen chapters by 12 different authors cover the topics of embryology and anatomy, clinical examination, squint, refractive errors, glaucoma, red eye, sudden loss of vision,