glaucoma. For the most part, however, the subjects are well chosen and largely bear out the editors’ contention that the sub-speciality of glaucoma is changing rapidly. Doubtless in a few years time Butterworths will ask them to reorganise the book in view of the additional advances that have occurred in the interim. In the meantime this book is well worth reading and should form part of the continuing education all ophthalmologists need to undergo.

ROGER A HITCHINGS


This handbook is the latest title in the Environmental Health Criteria series commissioned by the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS), and it documents the known effects of ammonia on human health and the quality of the environment.

Prepared by a distinguished WHO task group, this report considers the environmental sources and levels of ammonia with respect to human exposure, the important effects on aquatic organisms, and the consequences of short and long term exposure. Atmospheric ammonia is principally derived from natural biological activity, but point sources from sewage treatment and industrial plants may give rise to local regional increases in concentration and contamination of surface waters. There are important toxic effects on aquatic organisms, in particular fresh-water fish, and they can present an important pollution problem. There is no evidence that ammonia is mutagenic in mammals or carcinogenic following long term exposure. Indeed ammonia does not appear to represent a direct threat to man except as a result of accidental exposure, with the familiar irritant or caustic effects. Exposure to ammonia in water supplies and food appears insignificant compared with the nitrogen intake through the diet available as metabolic ammonia. The effects of short term inhalation and oral exposure are described, but the ophthalmologist will be disappointed by the passing reference to the acute effects of ammonia on the eye. In general, the report makes interesting reading and there is clearly little room for complacency, since point source emissions of ammonia from urbanisation, industry, and farming when deposited in a sensitive environment can induce significant toxic effects on man and his environment.

ROBERT J COOLING


The author is an ophthalmic pathologist with a rich experience based on personal study of specimens submitted to the Eye Pathology Institute in Copenhagen. With his expertise in clinical ophthalmology and long practice in lecturing to students in both ophthalmology and pathology, he is thus well equipped to compose an authoritative text acceptable to trainees in either discipline.

Before launching into a systematic, tissue-orientated account of the histopathology of ocular disease he provides an eminently practical and useful introductory section which tells the aspiring ophthalmic pathologist how to process and examine the eye and its adnexal tissues and how to interpret a range of staining methods. Given the stated readership this is a most valuable inclusion, and, although there is some risk in writing at this level, the author has judged the matter nicely and the result is neither condescending nor overelaborate.

Within a fairly short space few disorders of importance are omitted, and there is a wealth of apposite illustrations, mostly of histological preparations. Those incorporated within the text are in monochrome and are of generally acceptable, if not outstanding, quality, but an appendix provides helpful colour representations of the several staining reactions to which the text alludes. The text itself is concerned principally with histological descriptions and cannot often be faulted.

If there is a criticism it is that from the ophthalmologist’s point of view a little more emphasis on the biological nature of the various lesions and their expected behaviour might have been useful. This is particularly relevant in respect of diseases, such as the non-neoplastic disorders of the retina, in which histopathological examination is rarely necessary to establish the diagnosis and is put to best advantage, if used, to derive an improved understanding of the disease process. Correspondingly, purely descriptive accounts in such circumstances are of little avail unless there is some attempt to explain how the changes come about.

But one cannot have everything without expansion in space and cost, and this is an intentionally short and moderately priced book. The above criticism is offered in a constructive spirit relevant to the future editions which must surely come, because it is much the best short book on the subject at present available.

ALEC GARNER


For many years the world of glaucoma was dominated by two standard textbooks ‘Lecture notes in glaucoma’ by Chandler and Grant, and Becker and Shaffer’s ‘Diagnosis and therapy of the glaucomas.’ Both offered in a single volume information about the whole subject of glaucoma. The former was characterised by a personal approach, cases histories, and no illustrations, while the latter was illustrated with good quality photographs, diagrams, and graphs crisply laid out and fairly didactic. Residents and glaucoma fellows used one (or both, for their emphases differed) for all essential information on the glaucomas. These books were the launching pads into the universe (field?) of glaucoma. These two standard books have now been joined by a third, ‘Textbook of Glaucoma’ by M Bruce Shields.

The ‘Textbook’ (as it will surely become known) arose out of an earlier ‘Study guide for glaucoma’ and is slightly misleadingly shown as a second edition. The textbook may be seen as an updated expanded volume of the study guide which has so outgrown its predecessor as to merit more than the term ‘revised edition.’ Using a standard chapter format the author covers the whole of the subject in just over 500 pages. Each chapter begins with an overview (summary) providing a framework for the beginner. The style is easy to follow and well written. The text and opinions are backed by 3950 references (up to July 1985), so that the book will act as
an important reference source for further reading in any aspect of the glaucomas. The text is enhanced by many diagrams of good quality and black-and-white photographs which are passable (for they are often reprinted from original articles and lose not only colour but clarity in the transfer). The textbook will join 'Lecture notes' and 'Becker—Shaffer' as one of the three standard glaucoma texts. Every practising ophthalmologist should read one of them. For those requiring the references included here the 'Textbook' is the one to own.


This work bids fair to become the authoritative source book on the literature of myopia. Written by one whose life-long clinical interest has been in the subject and who has made important contributions to the surgical technique of sceral support, it ranges widely over every aspect of its subject. The commonly encountered myopias are divided into three groups, physiological or correlation myopia without any axial elongation; intermediate myopia, a newish term in which axial elongation is indicated by the presence of a crescent bordering the disc; and pathological myopia, wherein posterior staphyloma is the distinguishing characteristic. The aetiology, pathogenesis, and treatment are considered for each of these groups. Finally the related myopias, as for example those of prematurity or that are drug induced, are reviewed.

As the book is a bringing together of the opinions of many workers in the field both historical and recent, it is not to be expected that the author will come down decisively on the side of some particular standpoint over a controversial issue. The reader should not therefore expect any easy answers to such thorny questions as the predictability of progression, the relevance of close work, the stabilising effect of contact lenses, and other unsettled problems. The encyclopaedic style of the text has indeed reduced what might in some cases have been an appropriate sense of perspective in some sections, where perhaps a little more weight could have been given to the more accepted viewpoints. In spite of this the work must become part of the personal literature of all who are interested in the optical anomalies of the eye.

Notes

European Ophthalmic Pathology Society


At the business meeting Dr J Mullaney was elected President for the next three years and Drs J Libert (Belgium), H Volker (FRG), and D de Wolff-Rouendaal (Netherlands) were elected to membership. Dr M Hanssens (Belgium) is the new Corresponding Secretary.

Oxford Ophthalmological Congress 1988

The Oxford Ophthalmological Congress will be on 3–6 July 1988. Applications for free papers are invited. Abstracts should be sent to Mr J F Talbot, FRCS, Honorary Editorial Secretary, Eye Department, Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2JF, to arrive no later than 1 December 1987.

J D Abrams