
This multi-author book is a comprehensive text dealing in detail with vitamin A, its functions, the effects of deficiency, and strategies for the control of vitamin A deficiency.

The first half of the book deals with recent scientific understanding of the biochemistry, physiology, and nutritional aspects of vitamin A and its deficiency. There is objective reviewing of important findings in the fields of the metabolism of vitamin A, relationships between vitamin A and other nutrients, the role of vitamin A in the immune system, vitamin A in pregnancy, and vitamin A and carcinogenesis. For each subject extensive references are given. The text highlights the deficiencies in our knowledge, particularly in regard to the functions of vitamin A, its role in the immune system, and the interrelationship between vitamin A, infections, and child mortality. This section will certainly be of interest and give an excellent reference text to scientists involved in work related to nutrition and particularly vitamin A.

The second and larger section of the book briefly discusses the pathogenesis and clinical aspects of vitamin A deficiency, illustrated with black-and-white photographs, before turning to a comprehensive review of strategies for the control of vitamin A deficiency. Following this are chapters on the control programmes in India, Central America, the Philippines, and Indonesia, showing the different experiences and possible ways in which vitamin A deficiency may be managed at the national level. This section on the control of vitamin A deficiency will be of great use to those involved in policy and programme planning in the field both of vitamin A deficiency and of other nutritional deficiencies.

With many authors there is a wealth of knowledge but also a significant amount of repetition of information. The book is a comprehensive text which seeks to unite the laboratory vitamin A research worker with the programme field officer dealing with vitamin A deficiency in a community. This is a mighty task, and one in which I believe the editor has been largely successful, in putting together this reference text.

Allen Foster


This is a very workmanlike book of 206 pages with a large number of references for each section, so there is plenty of secondary reading for the interested ophthalmologist. This is the third volume of Ophthalmology Annual and keeps up the good work of the previous two volumes. Selection of material is a skill and the series editor has done well in achieving a balance between esoteric topics and those for a wider general readership.

An account of penetrating keratoplasty and cataract surgery in children forms the opening section. This is a good review article, suitably conservative but possibly over cautious when discussing intraocular lenses in children. The section on visual acuity and cataract surgery will interest most ophthalmologists, as after all it is the basis of much of their daily work. The section describes the various adjuncts to assessing visual function in patients with cataracts—especially important where coexistent ocular disease is present. Equipment such as PAM (potential acuity meter), blue field endoscopy, LIP (laser interferometric acuity), VEP (visual evoked potential), and pattern VEP are described and their place in assessing cataract patients evaluated. The sections on penetrating ocular trauma and on surgical management of hyphaema concentrate mostly on vitreous surgery and surgical treatment of hyphaema respectively. The latter management of hyphaema is perhaps over elaborate. Optic neuritis is an excellent, lucid section with some welcome clinical guidelines such as that 'CT scan should not be used to diagnose optic neuritis; it is used in the evaluation of patients suspected of having optic neuritis for the purpose of helping to eliminate certain other disorders.'

The section on oblique muscle surgery summarises the current views and indication for this type of surgery. The diagrams in this section are less than clear, which is unfortunate, as clear diagrams would have helped the reader greatly. Glare disability at first glance seems an unusual inclusion in this volume, but an excellent section on this subject sets out to examine and quantify a widely encountered physiological and pathological problem. The historical account of Holladay's experiments on glare is of particular interest, leading to the modern methods of glare testing and alleviating glare. Side effects of drugs immediately captures the interest of ophthalmologists who are constantly asked about ocular side effects. This section is very short and is based on recent documentation from the USA Registry of Drug Induced Side Effects, particularly on systemic effects of timolol, allopurinol cataracts, and chloramphenicol blood dyscrasias.

The section on the current status of refractive surgery is suitably conservative in its approach but optimistic about correcting high refractive errors, especially with epikeratophakia. This section summarises present developments satisfactorily. Cosmetic eye surgery commences with a review of the surgical anatomy and outlines the principles of eyelid surgery. Following this is a description of blepharoplasty in various conditions and age groups. A whole section on diabetic macular oedema may seem excessive, but this last section contributes a precise and careful guide to the treatment of this common condition with emphasis on diabetic control, follow-up examinations, and laser treatment.

This is an eminently readable book, and almost all of it will be of value to practising ophthalmologists whatever their special interest.

James L. Kennerley Bankes


This book on the eye and spectacles represents an updated revision of the 59th volume in the series of opthalmic textbooks Bücherei des Augenarztes which has contributed so much to German ophthalmology for the past few years. It is a comprehensive manual on optics and refraction, dealing in detail with the theoretical aspects of the subject and providing useful practical advice on such topics as lens forms and materials.
Book reviews

In several sections the book becomes rather too technical for the ordinary ophthalmologist and is better suited for the optician in training, but the author is to be congratulated on his commonsense approach to what can often be a difficult area. T J FIFTYCHE

The 109th volume of this series is composed of a collection of articles on acute eye disease and symptoms. This attractive idea of grouping together ophthalmic emergencies with situations where a rapid diagnosis is important succeeds well, and the book can be positively recommended to ophthalmologists. Chapters include neuro-ophthalmological subjects such as acute loss of vision, acute disc swelling and optic neuritis, headache, eye pain and coma, and acute disturbances of accommodation, visual field, ocular movements, diplopia, vertigo, and colour vision. In addition there are contributions on acute aspects of intraocular haemorrhage, uveitis, keratitis, corneal oedema, glaucoma, hypotony, endophthalmitis, exophthalmos, orbital infections, and lens related problems. The management of most of these emergencies conforms to that practised in Britain, although it is refreshing to see the occasional variation, such as the prescribing of a glass of brandy in the treatment of acute closed-angle glaucoma (supported by the appropriate reference).

Tacked on to the end somewhat surprisingly are two articles on AIDS and radial keratotomy, which, although they do not quite fit into the general scheme of the book, are useful contributions in their own right.

Good editorship has produced a uniformity of presentation with excellent illustrations and diagrams and has kept down the number of unnecessary references, and each chapter, with one exception, carries an English translation of the summary.

This volume provides a useful reference book, not only for ophthalmologists in training but also for those in practice as well. T J FIFTYCHE


This handbook on legal guidelines in ophthalmic practice is produced in the form of a loose-leaf folder divided into sections. Within these are included information and advice on such subjects as the civil rights of the individual patients and ophthalmologists, legal and social rights, industrial medicine, and guidelines on minimal requirements for visual suitability and fitness in various occupations. Certain sections are left empty, presumably to be filled later, and interestingly these include headings on criminal law, professional rights, and scales of charges. Apart from a brief insight into some of the bureaucratic aspects of German ophthalmic practice there is little in this publication to interest the British ophthalmologist, nor is there likely to be, even if the missing sections are filled. T J FIFTYCHE

This is an excellent book. It fills a notable gap in the currently available ophthalmic literature by providing a comprehensive and in general up to date review of virtually the entire subject of clinical ophthalmology, and at a reasonable price.
The editor has assembled 23 main chapters by 50 highly respected authors, most of whom are practising ophthalmologists. The main emphasis has been directed towards the clinician, with good supporting chapters on electrophysiology, pharmacology, biochemistry, ultrasound, immunology, low vision, and epidemiology. Most of the chapters are well referenced.

Inevitably in a book of this size there are some weaker chapters, but overall it provides a superb update on current ophthalmic practice. An obvious omission is the lack of a chapter on orbital disease, but this is partly rectified by a very good contribution on radiology and the orbit.

In summary, I can warmly recommend this book to all with an interest in ophthalmology. It is very much a postgraduate text, and a fairly advanced knowledge of the subject is assumed. There are many examples of the ‘subtle insights’ alluded to by the editor in the preface, and every ophthalmologist will find something of interest here. FRCS candidates will find this book an invaluable adjunct to their reading, while all medical libraries should consider buying at least one copy. JOHN BEARE


This book is a basic surgical guide to cosmetic surgery around the eyelids which achieves the authors' stated goal of serving as a 'framework for surgeons learning cosmetic blepharoplasty and as a resource to 'finesse in blepharoplasty' for the more experienced surgeon.' The authors' techniques of upper and lower lid blepharoplasty are carefully described, and where these descriptions differ from other recognized techniques the reasons are clearly stated. Interestingly the longest chapter is devoted to eyebrow ptosis, and throughout the book great stress is laid on the importance of considering the whole eyelid and eyebrow region and not just the upper or lower eyelids in isolation. In addition there are chapters on blepharoplasty in the oriental patient and on blepharopigmentation. Though no actual technique is described in any detail for treating blepharopigmentation.

The book is well illustrated throughout with diagrams which make the text easy to follow. Not every surgeon practising cosmetic surgery will agree with all the techniques described, but the book certainly achieves its goal of describing a simple logical set of operations which should give excellent results if carried out as recommended. This makes the book well worth buying for the inexperienced surgeon, while the assessment of the basic characteristics of the whole mid-face and eyebrow region in addition to the eyelids makes it interesting reading for those more experienced. JR O'Collin