analysis employed by these authors did not provide 'a precise assessment of the effect of diabetic duration on lens biometry.' In terms of the diabetic subgroup the only similarity in the findings of these two studies was that they both demonstrated diabetic duration to be relevant to lens thickness.

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Hold-up of fluorescein in the arm

Str,-A potentially common cause of early arterial phase fluorescein angiographic delay is reported. A fit 36-year-old draughtsman with unilateral paracentral visual distortion of six months' duration and bilateral macular pigment epithelial changes was investigated by fluorescein angiography. 5 ml of 20% sodium fluorescein was injected by 21 gauge 'butterfly' into a dorsal hand vein, followed by 4 ml wash-through of 9% saline. No dye appeared in the retinal arterioles. The injected (upper) arm, resting on the fundus camera handlebar (fore-arm pronated), became uncomfortable above the elbow medially. This eased on lifting the limb. Fluorescein entered the retinal vessels 10 seconds thereafter (arm-retina circulation time), 117 seconds after initial intravenous injection. The delay was caused by the tourniquet effect of the camera handlebar. The dorsal veins of the hand drain into the basilic vein and laterally into the cephalic vein, which may drain almost entirely into the basilic by a median vein in the cubital fossa. Pressure on the medial upper arm in such individuals will slow venous drainage from the limb – not so if the proximal cephalic vein is larger.

In this patient the bolus effect was reduced, making identification of treatable leaking spots more difficult in the early phase angiograms. Upper limb position and support (previously described for antecubital injection) must be considered during fluorescein angiography.

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BOOK REVIEWS


This slim book was written for general practitioners. It is the second in a series co-authored by Dr Daily (the other covering neurology) and a very good buy at £5.95. Mr Kanski is well known for his books on many aspects of ophthalmology without the usual user-friendly easy read text and high standards of production.

The text is set out as questions which are then answered in language which general practitioners will understand. The authors cover all common conditions such as senile macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataract. In addition there are useful sections on less obvious topics such as visual standards and blind registration. There is a two-page display at the end entitled 'What to do and to whom.' This sets out the rapidity of referral indicated for various conditions. The text is well set out on the pages, easily read, and impressively free of spelling mistakes. Illustrations are used sparingly but effectively.

The ophthalmic content is of a high standard. The text represents a distillation of modern views on clinical management of ophthalmic problems. There are a few points which ophthalmologists might be interested to discuss among themselves. For example, the reader is advised to remove a metal foreign body from the cornea in the surgery and clear the rust ring. Some may consider this unnecessarily exciting. The indication of the slit-lamp. General practice elements are well covered – for example, the relationship between timolol and asthma, and the need for ophthalmologists to visualise senile macular changes before advising whether cataract surgery would be helpful. The index was particularly helpful in tracking items down.

This book really succeeds in two areas. First, it is short. This should encourage the potential reader to pick it up. The whole thing could be read in 10 minutes a day over seven days. Second, it offers solutions to problems general practitioners face during their daily work and is therefore much more user friendly than a short textbook. The answers to clinical problems are given at a level which should not frighten anyone. A general practitioner who has struggled with conventional texts would probably find a few minutes with this book most enlightening. In conclusion, we strongly recommend it for general practitioners.

JOHN BRAZIER ROY MACGREGOR


The ophthalmic subspecialties have given birth to a pantheon of learned texts, each filling a niche in the perceived requirements of the reading public. Some appear as atlases, others as multiauthored tomes held together by the editor, while others appear as the result of superhuman endeavour by a single author aiming to stamp his own personality on to his chosen field. Each of these books, despite their different personalities, common the central core of the subspecialty, embellished according to the author’s perception of the niche to be filled. It is this core that Kanski and McAllister have captured.

In this slim volume, written in a clarity of style which the senior author has made his own, is summarised with admirable simplicity the whole of the subspecialty. Each chapter is well illustrated, with note form presentation of information and clinical pearls boxed for extra emphasis. A short bibliography for further reading is available for the curious. The book forms an admirable launch pad for the tyro and an admirable read for the paradigmatic. It is a text which any practitioner in the field would be proud to have produced but few could have achieved.

R A HITCHINGS

Letters to the editor. Book reviews