

BOOK REVIEW

Duane's Ophthalmology on CD-ROM. CD-ROM with 103 pp user's manual, 1995 edition. Tasman W, Jaeger EA, eds. Philadelphia: J B Lippincott. Price: single user \$875, residents \$699, current print subscribers \$437.50, annual updates (tentative) \$125. ISBN 0-397-51526X.

The same CD-ROM is compatible with both PC and Macintosh computers. Minimal system configuration: *Windows*: 386 IBM PC or compatible computer (486 recommended), *Windows* version 3.1, 6 MB available hard disk space, 4 MB RAM and a 256 colour graphics display. *Macintosh*: 68030 equipped computer (68040 recommended), system version 6.8, 6 MB available hard disk space, 4 MB RAM and a 256 colour graphics display.

Electronic medical textbooks on CD-ROM offer the user instantaneous access to information, superb searching capability, and compact storage. *Duane's ophthalmology on CD-ROM* contains the full text and illustrations of both *Duane's clinical ophthalmology* and *Duane's foundations of clinical ophthalmology*, a total of nine volumes, containing over 10 000 pages and 9500 illustrations.

Reading the 14 page 'Quick start' chapter of the printed manual is sufficient for operating the basic features of the package. Occasionally, it is desirable to consult the online help, which also offers an online tutorial. Users with even minimal experience in the use of a computer and mouse are capable of mastering the basics within an hour or so.

Besides the two options of a subject index and an author index, searching text strings (by key terms or phrases) is performed via a query feature, enabling both boolean and proximity operators. One major difficulty with searching a 10 000 page reference source is the large number of matches for almost any subject or combination of subjects. For example, searching 'diabetic retinopathy' retrieved 474 occurrences of the term in 74 chapters. Cross matching 'diabetic retinopathy' with 'laser' narrowed the search down to 12 chapters. Fortunately, for each query the user is presented with an orderly list of the chapters containing the requested term and the number of times the term appears within each chapter. Double clicking a chapter's title retrieves the chapter's full text on screen, with the queried terms appearing within the text in bold letters.

As far as the text is concerned, the package performs very well on a 486 equipped PC with a double speed CD-ROM drive. While all illustrations, including colour photographs, are fully reproduced on screen, their overall quality on a Super VGA monitor with 256 colour graphics card (the minimum recommended graphics configuration) is somewhat inferior to the printed version. However, a more sophisticated graphics card (highly recommended) and the program's built in feature of zooming in on parts of the image, significantly reduces this drawback.

Multiple electronic bookmarks and sticky notes can be attached to the text, while sections of the text can be highlighted or printed.

One inherent problem with the use of computerised medical textbooks is the inconvenience of reading large sections of text from a computer screen. Since *Duane's ophthalmology* is primarily a reference source (rather than a cover to cover textbook) the benefits of computerised searching capabilities and fast retrieval definitely outweigh this inconvenience.

In conclusion, the combination of superb searching capabilities, compact storage, user friendliness, and access to both the foundations and clinical volumes of 'Duane's' make this package an indispensable addition to the library of the practising ophthalmologist.

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NOTICES

Royal Society of Medicine, Section of Ophthalmology

The following meetings (beginning at 5 pm) are open to RSM members and their guests only.

NEW HORIZONS IN THERAPEUTICS, 9 May 1996

The identification of human tumour antigens: a strategy for developing tumour vaccines; New developments in the management of CMV retinitis; The development of ophthalmic drugs; The challenge of gene therapy in the context of eye diseases.

Further details: Alyson Taylor, Sections Officer, Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AE. (Tel: 0171 290 2985; fax: 0171 290 2989.)

REGISTRARS' MEETING, 13 June 1996, 2 pm

For registrars to present research work and case reports. Papers to be considered for publication. Abstracts should be submitted (max 200 words) for the attention of P Murray, The Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AE. Closing date for entries is 12 April 1996.

Lupus UK

Lupus Awareness Week 6-13 April 1996. Further details: Brian Hanner, Director, Lupus UK, 51 North Street, Romford, Essex RM1 1BA. (Tel: 01708 731251; Fax: 01708 731252.)

XI Tübingen Detachment Course: Retinal and Vitreous Surgery

The XI Tübingen Detachment course on retinal and vitreous surgery will be held on 11-12 April 1996 at Kupferbau, Gmelinstrasse 8, 72076 Tübingen, Germany. Further details: Office Professor Dr I Kreissig, Univ-Augenklinik, Schleichstrasse 12, 72076 Tübingen, Germany. (Tel: 07071 294758; Fax: 07071 293746.)

First International Symposium on Special Aspects of Radiotherapy

The first international symposium on special aspects of radiotherapy, 'Radiotherapy of ocular disease' will be held on 4-5 May 1996 at the Free University, Berlin. Further details: Dr T Wiegel, Department of Radiotherapy, University Hospital Benjamin Franklin, Hindenburgdamm 30, 12200 Berlin, Germany. (Tel: 030/84 45-3478; Fax: 030/834 18 65.)

1st Congress of the Surgery of Bosnia and Herzegovina with international participation

The 1st Congress of Surgery of Bosnia and Herzegovina with international participation will take place on 12-15 May 1996, in Sarajevo. Further details: Professor Hasan Piranic, Co-organiser, Fund for Renewal and Development of the Clinical Center University of Sarajevo. (Tel: (387 71) 64 46 96.)

International Congress The Cornea

An international congress entitled 'The Cornea' will be held at the cultural Centre Zitelle, Venice from 16-18 May 1996. Further details: Medicina Viva, Viale dei Mille 140, 43100 Parma, Italy. (Tel: ++39-521-290191/290194; Fax: ++39-521-291314.)

3rd Meeting ESOPES

The third meeting of the European Society for Out-Patient Eye Surgery will be held on 16-18 May 1996 in Potsdam, Germany. Scientific directors: Dr Volker Rasch, Potsdam, Germany and Dr Jérôme Bovet, Geneva, Switzerland. Further details: SYMPORG SA - Congress Organisers, 7, av Pictet-de-Rochemont, CH-1207 Geneva, Switzerland. (Tel: (+41-22) 786 37 44; Fax: (+41-22) 786 40 80.)

Head, Neck and Facial Pain Symposium

A meeting on head, neck and facial pain will be held in the East Wing of the Brighton Centre from 22-24 May 1996. The meeting will bring together anaesthetists, surgeons, dentists, neurologists, ENT specialists, and psychiatrists. Further details: Intermarket, 14a Ship Street, Brighton BN1 1AD. (Tel: 01273 325315; Fax: 01273 323882.)

2nd International Symposium on Retinal Pigment Epithelium

The 2nd international symposium on retinal pigment epithelium and the 4th meeting of the European Macula Group will take place from 29 May to 1 June 1996 at the Palazzo Ducale, Genoa, Italy. Further details: Secretariat, Medicina Viva, Servizio Congressi, Viale dei Mille, 140, 43100 Parma, Italy. (Tel: 39-521-290191/290194; Fax: 39-521-291314.)

XVIth Biennial International Congress of SIDUO

The International Society for Ophthalmic Ultrasound is holding a congress in Munich,