

## Letter to the Journal

Sir,

### A New Clinical Slit Lamp Reference Stand

A new clinical slit lamp reference stand is described which can be used to hold information at a convenient distance and enable easy reference while the slit lamp is being used. It is envisaged that it will be of use in the grading of various eye conditions such as cataract, corneal disease and diabetic retinopathy. It could also be used as an aid in the teaching of ophthalmology.

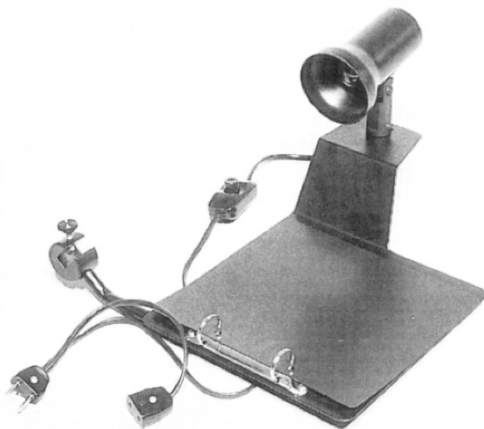
Whilst examining a patient at the slit lamp it is difficult and inconvenient to refer to an atlas or a grading system. With the introduction of more grading systems in ophthalmology which require a direct comparison between standard photographs or diagrams and that which is observed clinically, it has become necessary to design a reference stand that can be attached to a standard slit lamp. It is important that the stand does not interfere with the mechanism of the slit lamp and that it is capable of holding information at a convenient distance to enable comparisons to be made. It is also important when grading coloured features such as nuclear brunescence that the

stand is well lit by an independent source of light that is of the same intensity and colour temperature as that of the slit beam.<sup>1</sup>

We have designed such a stand and have found it to be of great value for holding the Oxford Clinical Cataract Classification and Grading System.<sup>1</sup>

The stand consists of a clamp for attachment to the slit lamp, at the level of the patient's head, and an aluminium body with a ring binder at the top for the information. A small lamp is incorporated at the bottom of the aluminium body and angled so as to evenly illuminate the information but not to shine into the patients eyes. The lamp contains a bulb of the same type as the slit lamp and is wired up to the same electrical circuit (see Figs. 1 and 2).

We think that this stand will be a useful aid to those who require to refer to photographs or diagrams while using a slit lamp. This is of obvious importance in the situation where it is necessary to grade certain features in relation to standard diagrams as in cataract grading. It may also be of use in teaching where the novice can compare what he is seeing to standard photographs. This should not only help him to make the correct diagnosis but may be a



**Fig. 1.** The slit lamp reference stand.



**Fig. 2.** The slit lamp reference stand being used to hold the Oxford Clinical Cataract Classification and Grading System.

superior teaching aid than consulting an atlas several hours later.

As medical audit assumes more importance it will become increasingly necessary accurately to grade the severity of disease. One method of doing this is to develop grading systems where the severity of the disease can be compared to standard diagrams or photographs. This method has been shown to be very reproducible for cataract grading<sup>2</sup> and no doubt would be eminently suitable for the grading of other conditions such as corneal disease, glaucomatous nervehead damage and diabetic retinopathy.

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#### References

- <sup>1</sup> Sparrow JM, Bron AJ, Brown NAP, Ayliffe W, Hill AR: The Oxford Clinical Cataract Classification and Grading System. *Int Ophthalmol* 1986, **9**: 207-25.
- <sup>2</sup> Sparrow JM, Ayliffe W, Bron AJ, Brown NAP, Hill AR: Inter-observer and Intra-observer variability of the Oxford Clinical Cataract Classification and Grading System. *Int Ophthalmol* 1988, **11**: 151-7.