
BOOK REVIEWS

Dystrophies Héritaires de la Macula

P. Turut (coordinator), G. Chaine, B. Puech, J.-C. Hache, T. Amzallag, J.-F. Rouland and P. François
Bulletin des Sociétés d'Ophtalmologie de France: Annual Report Special Issue, November 1991.

This is a multi-author publication produced by recognised experts in the field. It addresses the genetic basis for hereditary disease and presents the rationale for appropriate investigations.

It presents European data not readily available in the English-language literature. It encompasses, however, data from the world literature and an extensive bibliography forms a major appendix to the chapters. Diagnostic confusion between clinically similar presentations and criteria for diagnosis are discussed. The dystrophies are logically presented, which overcomes the absence of an index, and the coverage is comprehensive. The dystrophies are beautifully illustrated with high-quality photographs and the text is supplemented by useful diagrams, electrophysiological records and family trees.

The publication is in French which, though excellent, may be a significant disadvantage to readers without reasonable fluency. It is possible that a translation may become available in due course.

Linda Ficker

Whose Standards? Consumer and Professional Standards in Health Care

C. Williamson
Open University Press, Buckingham, 1992.

This is a short and surprisingly readable book by a Vice Chairman of a Health Authority, in which the author puts forward a theoretical framework for understanding consumerism in health care, and its relationship to the professionalism of those caring for patients. Such a subject might seem an anathema to many doctors, who are becoming only too familiar with the language which variously describes the recipients of their care as clients, customers or consumers, instead of patients. Yet, with the help of pertinent examples from the past (who now questions that parents should be able to visit their children in hospital whenever they wish, or that demand feeding is right for neonates?), the book puts forward a convincing case that health care professionals should be able to learn from and respond to, the needs and demands of patients and their organisations. The book could be read by anyone involved in the planning of patient care and provides an additional perspective to the role of doctors, both trained and in training.

Paul Hunter