BOOK REVIEWS

Practical Atlas of Retinal Disease and Therapy

Edited by William R. Freeman. Raven Press: New York, 1992.

When writing this book Dr. Freeman set out to provide readers at all levels of training with a 'pragmatic atlas'. This he has managed to do admirably.

The book is arranged in 18 chapters, each written by an internationally acknowledged expert. All the important aspects of common medical and surgical retinal disorders are covered and though the text tends to reflect the personalities and personal views of the authors, the strong editorial presence is evident throughout, ensuring that the book remains concise and authoritative. Each chapter is richly illustrated by fundus colour photographs, though the clarity in some is better than in others. In addition there are many clear line drawings and retinal paintings which complement the text well. The artwork accompanying the chapters on diabetic vitrectomy and on the surgery of proliferative vitreoretinopathy is particularly impressive.

There is no doubt that this is an excellent book and Dr. Freeman should be congratulated on providing us with such a valuable collection of reference articles.

Zdenek J. Gregor

The Vestibulo-ocular Reflex and Vertigo

Edited by James A. Sharpe and Hugh O. Barber
Raven Press, New York, 1992

That the vestibulo-ocular reflex (VOR) is of fundamental importance in the maintenance of normal ocular stability is graphically illustrated by a brief case report in Leigh & Zee's book, *The Neurology of Eye Movements*. A patient who had received excessive streptomycin therapy could not read unless he braced his head against a solid support, otherwise the printed page jumped with each heartbeat. When walking in the street he could not recognise faces or read signs unless he stood still. It is evident that an intact VOR is crucial to compensate for naturally occurring body and head movements, as well as turns and tilts.

Research on the vestibular system has increased exponentially over the past three or four decades and the volume under review brings together relevant laboratory and clinical studies. The editors, Sharpe and Barber, are respectively Professors of Neurology and Otolaryngology at the University of Toronto, Canada, and of the fifty contributors, approximately half are Canadian, half from the United States and three from Australia. Apart from the above disciplines, visual scientists, physiologists, psychiatrists and ophthalmologists contribute.

The book is divided into five sections covering the clinical anatomy and physiology of the VOR, the otolith ocular reflex, smooth pursuit eye movements and visual–vestibular interactions, and finally nystagmus and vertigo, diagnosis and treatment. The material starts from basic principles and builds up a picture of a complex stabilising system with multiple inputs and on-line recalibration and fine tuning. How disturbances of both the central and peripheral elements of the system produce symptoms and signs is explained. Clinical tests of the VOR are outlined and disorders familiar to neuro-ophthalmologists such as skew deviation, the ocular tilt reaction and alterations of the subjective visual vertical are discussed. Smooth pursuit eye movements also receive considerable attention. The substantial capacity for adaptation and compensation, in the face of pathological change, especially if this is subacute in onset, is stressed.

This is primarily a book for otolaryngologists, vestibular physiologists and neurologists. There is much of interest for ophthalmologists, particularly in relation to the origin of the various types of nystagmus. The contributions vary in accessibility for the non-specialist reader but are all highly referenced. It is not a book to be read through at a sitting, but it is an invaluable reference work that should find a place in ophthalmological departmental libraries.

John S. Elston