
BOOK REVIEWS

Outline of Ophthalmology

R. Coakes and P. Holmes Sellors
Butterworth-Heinemann, London, 1995

This is the second edition of the original which was first published in 1985 by J. Wright and Sons. The excellent layout and format remain largely unchanged. The first part deals with the differential diagnosis of common symptoms which present to the clinician, namely loss of vision, ocular discomfort, abnormal ocular appearances and motility problems, while the second part deals with the eye in systemic disease. There has been an addition of a chapter on structure, function and development which is fully justified as it makes understanding of disease processes so much easier for the beginner. The anatomy of the eye is illustrated with line diagrams which are simple but easy to understand.

The second chapter takes the reader on a step-by-step approach to successful clinical examination of ocular signs by both specialist and non-specialist clinicians using simple diagnostic tools such as a torch and direct ophthalmoscope. In the subsequent chapters, these signs are now illustrated in colour, which makes a marked improvement on the previous edition where they were in black and white. In addition, arrows have been superimposed onto the colour slides to point out subtle signs such as collateral vessels at the disc and small dendritic ulcers. Short but succinct text set alongside the illustrations throughout the book provides a thorough outline of ocular disorders commonly encountered in ophthalmic clinics. The final part of the book gives an overview of the diagnostic tests, operations and optical aids, providing an extremely useful and rapid reference for medical students and non-ophthalmic clinicians who are unsure of the ophthalmic jargon. There is also a chapter on ocular pharmacology which gives succinct information on uses of drugs and their side-effects. This is useful to clinicians and general practitioners who prescribe topical medications on an infrequent basis.

Overall this is an excellent ophthalmic text for both medical students and general practitioners, giving a thorough overview of commonly encountered ocular disorders. The colour photographs with arrows pointing out subtle lesions of note are very helpful to the novice while the layout provides quick reference for the busy clinician who needs to make an accurate diagnosis.

B. Hoh

Retinal Detachment, Second Edition

J. J. Kanski and Z. J. Gregor
Butterworth-Heinemann, London, 1995

This book aims to give junior ophthalmologists an overview of retinal detachment and after 9 years it goes into its second edition. It has been extensively revised to cover recent advances in vitreoretinal surgery and incorporates an additional author, Zdenek Gregor.

The initial chapters guide the reader through examination techniques, pathogenesis, clinical features and prophylaxis of rhegmatogenous retinal detachment. Examination techniques, and what you should see, are well illustrated and described: this section should be read by all those putting on an indirect ophthalmoscope for the first time. Thereafter preoperative considerations, principles and techniques of standard external retinal surgery are also well described in a very practical way, providing a lucid approach in an area of ophthalmic surgery in which many junior ophthalmologists may feel in the dark.

Three new chapters describe the principles, techniques and complications of vitrectomy for retinal detachment. This gives a useful introduction to such techniques, rather than being a comprehensive guide, and helps complete the overall picture of retinal detachment surgery. The book is well illustrated by photographs and excellent Tarrant pictures. Many figures are new but I had reservations about a few of the photographs surviving from the first edition (particularly showing placement of a rather bulky and posterior circumferential sponge): it is a shame that these were not also replaced.

In summary this is a concise, well illustrated and practical guide which is easy to read (in a couple of evenings) and will give the junior ophthalmologist a good understanding of the diagnosis and management of retinal detachment. This new edition should certainly be on the shelves of your departmental library.

S. J. Charles

ABC of Eyes, Second Edition

P. T. Khaw and A. R. Elkington
BMJ Publishing, London, 1994

This is an excellent book: clear, concise, well illustrated. The fact that the first edition went to eight impressions illustrates its popularity and use. Aimed at GPs, non-specialist accident and emer-

gency departments and medical students, it covers basic ophthalmology comprehensively and in particular the 'symptom-led' chapters (e.g. acute loss of vision, the red eye, gradual loss of vision) and useful information (e.g. eligibility for registration as partially sighted, useful contact addresses) make it invaluable for a busy GP surgery. Although the publishers promise a 'completely revised chapter on cataracts', there is little new in the new edition and something on the complications of cataract surgery would have been welcome, but the enlargement of the photographs is helpful. My only criticism is that, as this will often be the only ophthalmology book in a GP surgery, a glossary would be useful, as many GPs faced with a letter from an ophthalmologist may not know the terms used (e.g. retinoschisis). This is probably the best short general text around, and if all medical students could be given a copy and persuaded to read it, ophthalmic knowledge by non-specialists would be dramatically improved!

Christopher Hammond

Oculoplastic surgery, Third Edition

Clinton D. McCord Jr, Myron Tanenbaum and William R. Nunery
Raven Press, New York, 1994

In this text there is a varied but balanced list of contributors many of whom have had long associations with the main editors, and these latter appear of a like-minded approach in their surgical discipline. The text has been standardised in such a style to allow consistency in detail, particularly when discussing technique. There is a well-defined schematic approach to surgery and due consideration is given to systemic pathology. The authors have been able to construct in every chapter a critical analysis of presenting pathologies and variations in surgical technique, leaving the reader in no doubt that the authors have had practical experience of the problems and are willing to offer the best possible solution. The framework of this text is supported by clearly detailed anatomical dissection and practical information on equipment; very few assumptions are made other than that the reader will be interested in the subject matter. The editorial style is informative and precise. The use of diagrams and tables emphasises a logical approach to differential diagnoses and subsequent surgical options can therefore have specific planning of a staged repair.

The only criticism I can lodge is in the production of the book and no doubt cost was a consideration. The illustrations are limited to black and white and although the essential anatomy is worthwhile in every section, it would have been improved with colour reproduction. As the chapters unfold, the reader is steered through every aspect of oculoplastic

surgery, including trauma and its essential repair which are not usually included in such a text. I feel that all manner of surgeons will benefit from this textbook: the inexperienced can absorb essential detail and the more experienced can compare and contrast personal experiences and techniques. Sonny McCord has built up his editorial board throughout three editions and enviably he has been able to translate his precise systematic approach in clinical matters to this textbook on the speciality. This allows the interested surgeon to benefit from his teaching and the patient, in particular, to gain from his experience.

E. G. Kemp

Clinical Cases in Ophthalmology

Hon Bing Hoh and David L. Easty
Butterworth-Heinemann, London, 1995

This book is unashamedly aimed at junior ophthalmologists about to take their specialist higher examinations. It provides the reader with one hundred cases, each with an illustration of an aspect of the case, and a short text providing the key information that should be imparted to an examiner under a series of sub-headings. In addition, there is a useful section on clinical examination techniques.

One's first impression upon flicking through the pages is that this is likely to be a very useful book for the target audience. However, on careful examination one sees that the quality of reproduction of many of the photographs is sub-optimal to say the least, particularly in keratoconus, corneal verticillata, pigment dispersion syndrome, Fuchs' heterochromic uveitis and pseudoexfoliation syndrome. In addition, given the opportunity to illustrate an aspect of albinism, the production of what would appear to be a normal fluorescein is a little surprising, as is the rather youthful appearance of the 'senile' ptosis.

Unlike many of the photographs, the text is consistently of high quality, emphasising the essential adage 'state the obvious first' in clinical examinations.

In conclusion, the book should provide a good way for potential candidates to get into the right frame of mind for approaching the ophthalmic clinical section of the MRCOphth and the FRCOphth. However, no book can substitute for the development of three-dimensional examination and detection techniques so necessary for the subtle physical signs that distinguish one diagnosis from its differential. These skills must be obtained in the clinic rather than in the library.

Stephen A. Vernon