

learning ophthalmology the poor illustrations and omissions from the text make it inadequate, and students would be better served reading one of the several other short textbooks of ophthalmology with a more complete coverage of the subject and superior colour plates.

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Dictionary of Optometry and Visual Science, 4th edition

Michel Millodot
Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1997,
£30.00, ISBN 0 7506 3145 7

As a book well known and widely used by the optometry profession in various parts of the world, Professor Millodot's *Dictionary of Optometry* has become a source of reference for both students and practising optometrists alike. Its present incarnation is not simply a revised version of the old books, but includes entire topics that were not covered in earlier editions. In this, the most recent edition, it concentrates on careful definition of the clinical terms involved in practice, and in contrast to previous editions it also attempts to give the user an overview of the fundamental scientific theories behind these. Hence the dictionary has increased in size dramatically to include this new material, accompanied by an amendment to the title.

With more than 3800 terms and definitions, the book contains references from a broad spectrum of specialties: optometry, including most aspects theoretical and clinical; orthoptics, the terms included allowing the reader an insight into the assessment and treatment of binocular vision and its abnormalities; ophthalmology, including ocular disease and systemic diseases affecting the eye; and other disciplines studied by all such as ocular anatomy, physiology and non-clinical visual science.

Along with this increase in content comes a change in the format of the book, with the inclusion of numerous diagrams and significantly more tables to help the reader find the required information as quickly as possible. There is also extensive cross-referencing, allowing the user to visit other relevant

terms and references if more information is needed. A comprehensive list of abbreviations and symbols used in all the aspects of vision science referenced in this book is also given in table form.

One of the less good aspects of this book, which has been pointed out as a flaw in previous editions, is the way some of the conditions are listed. In most circumstances the term is catalogued under the noun. For example Graves' disease is referenced under disease, not Graves'. Unfortunately, this is slightly confusing and the problem is compounded by the rule being applied inconsistently. Even though this is explained in the dictionary's directions it is something that I feel needs to be altered to allow more efficient use.

The fourth edition of this dictionary is now a much more comprehensive text, with the inclusion of various aspects of clinical diagnosis and management, and theoretical vision research. It is cheap and relatively easy to use, but does this make it more accessible to other professionals interested in vision and the eye? The dictionary is primarily a source of reference for optometry students and to a lesser extent practising optometrists. With the inclusion of more terms it has become a more useful reference guide to students from other related areas, such as ophthalmologists and orthoptists, especially those who are preparing for their optics and refraction modules. It will also be a great resource for other allied professionals researching in biomedical science and visual psychophysics. Its utilisation, in conjunction with other core texts, will help the user to find out as quickly and easily as possible the required information.

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Revision in Optics and Refraction

Wai-Ching Leung,
Arnold, London, 1996, £14.99,
0 340 64613 6

There is a distinct shortage of books aimed at the Optics and Refraction module of the FRCOphth. Like many revision books, this text will help candidates in their preparation for the

examination and does not claim to be a comprehensive source. The book starts with a brief, common sense section on 'teach yourself' refraction, with hints on how to approach the examination. One obvious point I would stress is that many candidates are helped by attending a refresher course on refraction, as it is easy to pick up bad habits by observation alone. The bulk of the book consists of four Tests of 60 MCQs, followed by answers and brief explanations. The format allows the reader to perform one Test, and review their performance before trying for an improved mark in the next Test!

On a more critical note, some of the statements in the first section of the book are misleading, the four Tests are fairly similar, with some repetition, and a few of the answers are either incorrect or ambiguous. For example, the duochrome test is described wrongly, and the explanations of the block and fan, and binocular balancing techniques left much to be desired. In Test 2, the answer to question 1 incorrectly states that a spectrum is not produced when white light passes through a lens, and question 20B is True (not False). The term 'circle of least diffusion' is used throughout, instead of 'circle of least confusion' and some of the explanations given are a little unclear. Such incidences detract slightly from the value of the book. However, in defence of the author, writing 240 MCQs based on the syllabus of the Optics and Refraction module must have been a truly daunting task, and one or two ambiguous questions might actually appear in a real examination. I was reminded that a problem for good candidates in some multiple choice examinations is one of trying to give the answer that the examiner expects, rather than the definitively correct answer.

The syllabus and format of the FRCOphth examination have both been modified since this book was written, but although it is already slightly out of date the book represents good value for money. If sitting the examination, I would certainly be unable to resist buying it, and if used in addition to other texts *Revision in Optics and Refraction* will be helpful to many.

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