

Ophthalmology: Examination Techniques, Questions and Answers

D.C. Broadway, A. Tufail and P.T. Khaw
Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1999,
£49.50, ISBN 0 7506 2500 7

The aim of this book as stated by the authors in their introduction is to assist exam-going candidates. Many books exist that help in the preparation for the MCQ component of the examination. However, a book like this concentrating on the examination techniques and the commonly asked questions directs the trainee to prepare adequately for the examination. Coming face to face with an examiner is an essential part of the examination structure. Adequate preparation should help a trainee face an examiner confidently. This book, I believe, should be helpful in achieving that aim.

The book is divided into three sections. The first deals with the techniques of examination through eleven well-constructed chapters. Beginning with the simple tests, the authors move on to more detailed examination techniques. They also include an appropriate discussion on the differential diagnosis and important clinical features. The added attraction is the checklist at the end of each chapter, which acts as a summary.

The second section deals with the various clinical conditions that one would come across in an examination, either as a clinical case or as part of an oral examination. The authors have concentrated their efforts in making this book appropriate for the purpose. The coverage is excellent, adequately supported by good-quality colour illustrations. The question-and-answer format, although unconventional, serves the purpose of the book very well.

In the last section, the authors stimulate the candidates to prepare for the examination by listing the various associations of ocular disorders with other organ system disorders. The coverage is exhaustive, bringing the candidate's attention to potential areas of discussion in an examination.

This book is an excellent source of information that would make a candidate comfortable on the eve of an oral or clinical examination. The organisation of the text makes it easy to obtain the necessary information quickly. Although aimed at exam-going candidates this book can serve well even those senior house officers who are in

their initial year of training. The book should find its way to the bookcase of every exam-going candidate. Mr Broadway and his co-authors should be congratulated on their effort.

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Macular Hole: Pathogenesis, Diagnosis and Treatment

Steven A. Medreperla and Brooks W. McCuen II
Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1999,
£40.00, ISBN 0 7506 9960 4

An excellent monograph, and the first one on this topic, this book is edited by Steve Madreperla and Brooks McCuen, who have both published extensively on the subject of macular hole. The book has a foreword by Dr Don Gass, who is widely credited with describing the early fundus changes in impending macular holes, and is dedicated to Dr Richard Green, Professor of Ophthalmic Pathology at the Wilmer Eye Institute, with the words 'for teaching us all the importance of clinicopathologic correlation in understanding the pathogenesis of ocular disease'. Having learned from Dr Green, during my fellowship at the Wilmer Institute, I can vouch for the fact that he is probably the finest teacher of ophthalmic pathology alive. He taught us not only the science of pathology but also its art!

Since the first description of macular hole repair by Kelly and Wendel in 1989, its management has accelerated rapidly due to enhanced knowledge of pathophysiology, gained from vitreoretinal surgery and from post-mortem examinations. Several of the 17 contributors to this text have made original contributions to our understanding of the pathogenesis of macular hole and its management, and this book benefits greatly from this wealth of knowledge. Tight editorial discipline has ensured that all chapters are of the highest standard, each chapter being comprehensively referenced. There is a common theme of building all discussion on a solid foundation of basic pathology. This reflects the influence of Dr Green has had on the editors.

Clearly a book such as this can not detail surgical techniques and list all milestones in the treatment of macular holes; however, it strikes a healthy balance between giving enough history to excite interest and succinct

presentation of current 'state of the art' to sustain interest throughout the book. The emphasis on fundamentals makes this book essential reading for all those who are likely to encounter macular holes in their clinical practice, from the resident through to the experienced macular surgeon. It will also be a welcome addition as a reference text in any library.

The only error I could find, and I am sure it is a typographical one, is in the first line of the second chapter. It characterises macular holes as 'absence of all layers of retinal tissue . . . at the fovea'. I am sure it is meant to read 'absence of all layers of *neuroretinal* tissue', as retinal pigment epithelium is actually present and forms the 'floor' of the hole.

The book aims to 'to bring the reader up to date on macular hole surgical techniques' and 'to enable this fund of knowledge to be used to critically evaluate future reports on macular hole surgery'. These objectives it achieves eminently.

It is an outstanding book and I recommend it very strongly. It is the closest one could come to having a personal tutorial from some of the clinicians contributing actively to our understanding of macular holes. I cannot help comparing this book to a good malt whisky from Scotland: distilled to perfection by experts and bottled after appropriate maturation to be enjoyed by all . . . but really cherished by the connoisseur.

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Kennerley Banke's Clinical Ophthalmology: A Text and Colour Atlas

Edited by G.G.W. Adams and A.D. Hubbard
Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1999,
£22.50, ISBN 0 7506 3908 3

This book provides a useful concise overview of ophthalmology to the non-ophthalmologist. The editors hope that the book will suit the needs of medical students, general practitioners, optometrists, orthoptists, casualty officers and those embarking on a career in ophthalmology. While there is insufficient detail for the career ophthalmologist, the book clearly achieves its aim of fulfilling the needs of the other groups targeted.

The editors have admirably managed the task of summarising the increasingly complex field of ophthalmology in a concise volume, less than 200 pages in total. The illustrations, mostly in full colour, are well chosen and reproduced. I appreciate the inclusion of a separate chapter devoted to eye injuries and first aid, which will be useful to casualty officers and general practitioners. The chapter on examination techniques is particularly praiseworthy, as it clearly highlights the simple examination techniques that can be done in the absence of specialised instruments.

There are, however, some shortcomings. I would have liked to see clearly demarcated indications for referral for specialist care set out as tables or flow diagrams. These are most useful when the reader wants to look up something quickly. I would also have liked a separate chapter on non-traumatic ocular emergencies with guidelines about immediate management and subsequent referral. Although formal references are not needed in a concise text, a list of suggested further reading would not go amiss. Surgical procedures are outlined, but important developments such as topical anaesthesia, multifocal intraocular lens implants and non-penetrating surgery for glaucoma are not mentioned. Patient education and counselling are topics given minimal coverage in most textbooks, and this book does not provide an exception. Especially for common problems such as blepharitis, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy, some notes about patient counselling would have been a useful addition.

The book provides a useful overview of the subject in a concise volume. In spite of some shortcomings, it will be a useful addition to the personal library of healthcare professionals who deal with ophthalmic patients.

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A Manual of Systematic Eyelid Surgery, 2nd edition

J.R.O. Collin
Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1999,
£45.00, ISBN 0 7506 4572 5

How do you improve on an acknowledged classic? . . . You don't, you just re-package it. This fifth re-print of the second edition of a highly respected text has an altered cover design but otherwise remains unchanged. It is still an immensely valuable reference text that should be accessible to all ophthalmic units.

The deceptively simple line drawings help to demonstrate the principles to follow for each procedure

described. Unfortunately it rarely appears as straightforward in practice and some representative colour photographs of key stages would enhance the overall impact.

The stepwise descriptions of procedures are logical and largely make up for things that are not clear in the diagrams, such that both complement each other well. Many useful hints and tips gleaned from years of experience are also passed on for the benefit of the reader and their patients.

The flow charts greatly facilitate decision making and develop an appreciation of the most pertinent parameters to take into account in tailoring the most appropriate procedure for each clinical condition.

As the manual is designed to be systematic rather than exhaustive it is not surprising that some details are not included; for example, recent changes in secondary implant material and alternatives to scleral wrap are not mentioned. Similarly there is no reference to endonasal approaches in the chapter on lacrimal surgery.

Despite these niggles this remains a very practical guide to eyelid surgery and represents good value – a must if not already available.

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Ocular Therapeutics: Pharmacology and Clinical Application

Paul U. Fechner and Klaus D. Teichmann
Slack, Thorofare, NJ, 1999, £44.95,
ISBN 1 55642 312 8

This book provides an excellent review of current medical treatment options in ophthalmology. It starts by dealing with the pharmaco-kinetics of ophthalmic medication and later outlines current antibiotic treatment in the management of ocular infections, and includes tables on dosages of drugs and advice on reconstitution and administration. Current anti-fungal and anti-viral treatments, including reference to medical treatment options for HIV infection, are also outlined. The role of immunosuppressives including corticosteroids with reference to ophthalmic practice is defined.

The pharmacology of medications affecting intraocular pressure and the medical management of glaucoma is well presented, and includes the newer anti-glaucoma preparations available.

The text is comprehensive, and the format of the book makes it easy to read with useful headings and concise descriptions of ophthalmic conditions and their treatment, with relevant and up-to-date references. The practical

nature of the book makes it ideal as a quick reference guide to current ophthalmic treatment options.

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Manual of Cataract Surgery

G.G. Bahadur and R.M. Sinskey
Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1999,
£40.00, 0 7506 7082 7

This book is a short manual of the techniques of cataract surgery used by the authors. I found it to have quite an American perspective. The book follows the patient's progression through the experience, from pre-operative evaluation through the states of surgery to possible complications.

Cataract surgery today is a wide field with different variations in practice, and to summarise these in such a small volume has posed the authors a large challenge.

I was disappointed at the briefness of the discussion of important areas such as biometry and intraocular lens calculations. The options for anaesthesia were not fully discussed, and understanding of fluidics and tension, forces involved in capsulorhexis, would have also been good to include, giving the surgeon a better understanding of phacoemulsification. The surgical techniques are well described and the illustrative drawings are excellent.

The authors suggest their audience to be junior surgical trainees, and certainly there are many useful ideas in the book. It is always interesting for the established cataract surgeon to see what his or her colleagues are doing.

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Ophthalmology Companion

W. Happe and D. Fischel
Arnold, London, 1998, £29.99,
ISBN 0 3407 4093 0

Ophthalmology, like all parts of medicine, is full of those facts that are rarely needed but which we all feel we should know. These facts are considered so important that all ophthalmologists in training are forced to memorise them for their fellowship examinations, yet all have been forgotten by the time the successful trainees have become consultants. How much more sensible it would be to commit these facts to a few sheets of paper that can fit into one's pocket. This is the purpose of this book: to be a companion, or a vade mecum, to help the maturing memory.