

University of Miami Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. Atlas of Ophthalmology

Edited by Richard Parrish II
Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1999,
£150.00, ISBN 0 7506 7075 4

This is a very ambitious book covering almost the whole spectrum of ophthalmology, including not only ocular conditions but also techniques of investigation, treatment and surgical management. There are a large number of clinical photographs, extensive tables and diagrams, CT and MRI scans, visual fields, and histological slides. The illustrations are of good quality and clarity and the photographs, while generally good, are disappointing in some areas.

The book's layout is clear and easy to follow and the illustrations catch one's attention and make it sympathetic to read. The text is informative and up to date and, although it would be impossible for a book of this size to exhaustively cover all the topics included, good, recent references are provided for further reading. Some sections are, however, better than others.

In covering surgical technique, there is always a danger that some of the information will quickly become outdated. This is likely to be the case for the techniques and machines referred to regarding cataract surgery and there are advances, for example in glaucoma surgery, which have not been mentioned. This, however, should not unduly detract from what is essentially a very good book.

Although very appropriate to ophthalmologists in training, its size and weight mean that it is certainly not a 'stocking filler' and so it may appeal

more to institutions than individuals. I think it would be a very useful reference text for any ophthalmology department, particularly where there are ophthalmologists in training.

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Companion Handbook to the Cornea, 2nd edition

Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1999,
£45.00, ISBN 0 7506 7144 0

This handbook appears to be an attempt to distil the essential information from its parent book of the second edition of *The Cornea*. Like its parent publication there are many good things about this companion handbook. The chapters cover all the main areas of corneal pathology and treatment. The individual layout of each chapter is clear and well annotated. It is a much easier publication to flip through compared with the parent publication. There is extensive use of lists and tables which makes it easy to identify, for example, causes of conditions and associated systemic conditions of corneal pathology. Clinical features are also laid out in structured fashion, making it easy for the doctor in training to run through the essential points in the condition being studied. The black and white illustrations are of reasonable quality and the colour illustrations in the centre of the book are excellent. However, one of the illustrations which is labelled as showing 'staining of an epithelial rejection line' looks to be much more like a geographical ulcer on top of a corneal transplant.

It is a pity that there are no references given at the end of each chapter. While it would be inappropriate to have the very large list of references that is used in the parent book, I suggest it would be more appropriate to have a list of half a dozen key references at the end of each chapter. This would provide a useful starting point for further exploration of the literature by the trainee ophthalmologist using the book. It is also a pity that although the contributing authors are listed at the front of the book, it is not clear for which individual chapters they are responsible.

Although the book is clearly a condensation of the parent publication it is still a very hefty tome with over 1000 pages. If this book was used frequently in a situation such as an Accident & Emergency Department in an eye hospital it is likely it would fall to pieces quite quickly. One way of reducing the size slightly would have been to exclude the basic science at the beginning of the book. This is not an area that needs to be reviewed in a textbook for use in the acute medical setting. Students are more likely to turn to definitive textbooks for information on basic science.

Despite these criticisms my overall impression is that this is a useful addition to the range of textbooks on the cornea, and while the parent publication will probably remain outside the financial range of most trainee ophthalmologists this useful up-to-date and generally inclusive textbook would make a good purchase.

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