

## Book reviews

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## The Retina in Systemic Disease

**Homayoun Tabandeh and  
Morton F Goldberg**

New York: Thieme-Elsevier, 2009

366 pages, RRP \$121.00

Reviewed by **IAN GUTTERIDGE**,

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The time-honoured process of book learning is under threat. We are becoming increasingly connected to and reliant on the internet. Search engines abound. Information and images spill out at the touch of a keyboard. Does the ophthalmic literature need another textbook or atlas in the age of the internet?

To be relevant in our field, a book must competitively exploit the positive aspects of a hand-held resource and the inherent weaknesses in the internet. Cost, compactness, convenience, succinctness are possible points of difference. There is also the ability to flick from page to page. Above all, there is the reliability of information based on the author's reputation and proper referencing and editing.

The *Retina in Systemic Disease* is not the first small handbook of ocular diseases. The authors set out to show basic

principles of fundal examination for detection of systemic disease for medical students, ophthalmologists, optometrists and physicians of many specialities. There is a deliberate policy of excluding discussion of treatments.

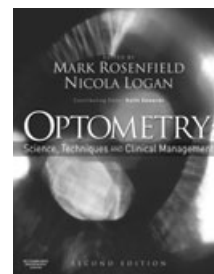
The early chapters briefly address examination techniques, which is of minimal interest to optometrists. There is a more useful group of short chapters on retinal signs and their differential diagnosis. These range from common observations such as retinal haemorrhages, hard exudates, microaneurysms and retinal oedema to more obscure features such as retinal crystals, telangiectasia, choroidal folds, mass lesions, pigmented lesions and vitreous opacities.

The rest of this book looks at the 'main game', namely, the fundus in systemic disease, beginning with cardiovascular, endocrine and metabolic conditions. The discussion and illustrations of diabetic retinopathy are extremely good, albeit compact. A sample of other chapter headings includes infectious, neurological, skin, rheumatologic, pulmonary, haematological, oncological and gastrointestinal disorders, indicating a very broad scope.

One would have to say that the range of systemic conditions covered is very inclusive and major omissions are not obvious. The text is mostly in dot-point form for easy learning and study. There are scattered 'pearls' to highlight special points. The novice might quibble that some dot points are too concise or vague to gain real insight but overall the information is a great start even when further searching might be needed.

The strengths of this book are the high quality photographs and the compact, succinct presentation. As a quick reference for the optometrist's chairside or the student's study desk, it is easy to recommend this book as an alternative to internet sources.

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## Optometry: Science, Techniques and Clinical Management

**Mark Rosenfield and Nicola Logan**

UK: Butterworth Heinemann/Elsevier, 2009

555 pages, RRP \$167.00

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Teaching optometry and recommending textbooks to students are challenging tasks. Students have limited resources and want books that are not too expensive, easy to read and relevant to their studies. With only five schools of optometry in Australia and New Zealand, the student market for textbooks is small. Although there have been some excellent books written by Australian authors, most that are recommended to students are written for optometrists in the UK, or USA and Canada. Although one could argue that optometry around the world is gradually becoming more uniform in the way it is practised, there are still differences in how things are done and the tests that are recommended for use in the consulting room. I was delighted that the contributing authors to this book include optometrists from the UK, USA, Canada and Hong Kong, and Professors David

Atchison and Jan Lovie-Kitchin from Australia.

The editors of this book state in the preface that they wanted to reflect the international spectrum of optometry and they have achieved this by carefully choosing contributors from around the world. The only weakness in the international flavour is a UK bias in the chapters that cover legal aspects of optometry and eye protection. To make the book more international, these issues should have been addressed globally.

The book is a successor to *Optometry*, edited by Keith Edwards and Richard Llewellyn and published in 1988. It is divided into three sections: optometric science, techniques and management. The management section includes management in general as well as for special populations.

Each section is subdivided into chapters and most chapters have a single author. Here lies both a strength and weakness of this book. A multi-author book risks repetition, omissions and varying style. To their credit, the editors appear to have given their contributors some good guidelines, making this less of an issue than I expected in a book written by so many.

A question must be raised in regard to a book that includes science, techniques and clinical management in 555 pages: is there is enough detail in each chapter to make reading worthwhile when there are whole textbooks devoted to what might be covered in one chapter? The authors acknowledge that the book cannot cover all aspects of the science, application and art of optometry, and set a more achievable goal of providing the reader with an introduction to each area to whet the readers' appetite and motivate them to explore more advanced sources of information. The reference lists at the end of each chapter help with this and there is an evidence-based approach to the writing.

The section of the book covering optometric science has 11 chapters. I particularly enjoyed the chapters covering visual development, psychology of vision and visual performance, as they gave good reviews of current science in these areas and were easy to read. The chapter on

ocular disease is a mere 30 pages and while well written could not possibly do justice to the scope and depth of eye disease that an optometrist needs to understand. This chapter would be a good introduction to eye disease for first or second year students of optometry but not useful for the practising clinician.

The second section of the book covering techniques seemed particularly strong in the areas of objective and subjective refraction. The information in this section was up to date, including newer optometric techniques, such as optical coherence tomography and central corneal thickness measurement. It was pleasing to see a chapter on prescribing spectacles as this important area is sometimes overlooked.

The final section of the book covers management. The first two chapters cover objectives of the eye examination and communication skills. These chapters seemed particularly pertinent for a student optometrist as their thinking of the optometric examination moves from a collection of tests to the real issue of defining and resolving vision problems. The chapters covering management of paediatric and low vision patients and patients with developmental disabilities provide useful tips even for experienced clinicians.

I expect that this book will make its way into many recommended textbook lists at optometry schools and will be useful for optometrists looking to review their knowledge or expand their scope of practice. This book is not as extensive as Borish's *Clinical Refraction* or as useful as a chair-side reference in its approach as Elliott's *Clinical Procedures*. It very successfully captures contemporary optometric practice, is beautifully produced for its price and its balance of theory and practice should have broad appeal.