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Book review

Anterior eye disease and therapeutics A-Z. 2nd ed.

A Bruce, M Loughnan
 Sydney: Elsevier Australia; 2011.
 380 pages
 Also available as an ebook

The authors of this book have attempted to summarise common and important conditions affecting the anterior eye in a concise and simple-to-read format. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of therapeutics in the management of these conditions. An explanation of common office-based ophthalmic procedures is also provided.

The standardised double-page format provides an excellent summary of each condition. It is easy to read and provides the reader with an efficient way to find relevant content. The pictorial images are of high quality. Each condition has at least one large colour illustration (clinical photograph or diagram) that clearly depicts the relevant pathology. The size and weight of the book makes it ideal to carry in a handbag or briefcase. This is particularly useful for registrars to carry while on call, or read on public transport.

The summaries in the appendices covering therapeutics and office-based procedures are comprehensive and a very useful inclusion. The book is written by Australian authors so is particularly relevant

to Australian prescribers. A number of texts published overseas recommend drugs that are not available or preferred in Australia, which can lead to confusion.

However, there are downsides to the book. It only covers the anterior eye which reduces its usefulness, especially for registrars on call. While a separate book on the posterior segment is available, other similar texts manage to cover the whole eye in a single volume.

The book organises conditions in alphabetical order. This unfortunately makes the book quite difficult to read from cover to cover for study purposes. Further, unless the diagnosis is known with certainty, it makes the book less useful in looking up possible differential diagnoses or related conditions. Schematic diagrams are of limited value and the use of schematic icons throughout the book, and in particular the opening groupings of conditions, adds little to the content.

The authors are to be commended for their efforts in producing this easy-to-read, well-illustrated textbook of conditions affecting the anterior eye. Its particular strength is its relevance to an Australian readership. Many readers, however, may prefer more established manuals that have a broader coverage and are organised in an anatomical rather than alphabetical format.

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