



## Big book gives clear view of big subject with international flair

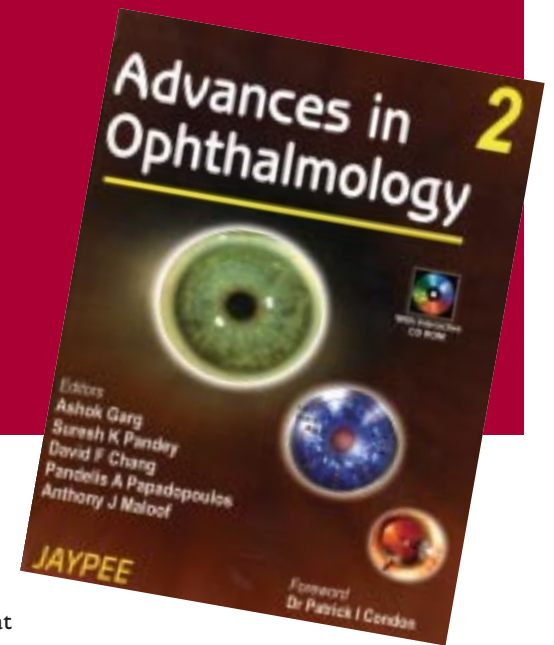
### ADVANCES IN OPHTHALMOLOGY 2.

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786 PAGES.

RICHLY ILLUSTRATED WITH COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS AND PLATES.



There are many types of biases in the scientific literature. Among the most discussed in recent years is the dominance of research done in the Western world, and more particularly the dominance of English-language publications in showcasing that research. Indeed, it seems that more articles are published in Western journals about North-South bias than from the world of medical research outside the prosperous West.

Against such a background, it is heartening to encounter a book written by a truly international collection of ophthalmologists. In fact, of all the books I have reviewed for this publication, none has been quite as international as this. The editors work in India, Greece, the USA and Australia. The introduction is written by an Irishman and contributors include ophthalmologists from Colombia to Sweden to Israel to Thailand. With 117 contributors to the book, one can only wonder how many total years of ophthalmological experience have gone into this book.

It is a work of epic proportions. The Greek poet Callimachus once wrote, "Mega biblion, mega kakion" – "a big book is a big evil." The authors in their preface describe their 786 page tome as a "mega book." I wonder if Pandelis Papadopoulos of the Ophthalmo-Check Eye Centre in Athens intended a nod to Callimachus.

Despite the warning of Callimachus, this book does its job in saintly fashion. True, it is large and bulky, but it is also designed with great clarity, and is easy to navigate. The type font is agreeably large; the pictures are clear and of practical use. Many of the chapters are on particular procedures and will be of great utilitarian benefit. The CD-Rom – see below for details – will also be very useful for practitioners.

There are seven major sections of the book proper. The first and longest – at 341 pages – deals with cataract surgery, with subsections on phacoemulsification, bimanual and manual small incision cataract surgery and MICS. This section features a discussion of one of the most evocative and, until you read the chapter itself, slightly threatening sounding names for a surgical technique I have come across in the chapter on "No Anaesthesia

Cataract Surgery with the Karate Chop Technique." Karate chop, developed by Athiya, Sunita and Amar Agarwal of India, certainly beats the alternative "central anterior chopping" in terms of catchiness.

There follows two sections on corneal-based and lens-based refractive surgery. The massive and important areas of glaucoma and management of retinal conditions follow. The penultimate section, entirely written by Ashok Garg, is an update on ocular therapeutics. Finally we have a miscellany on such topics as AIDS/HIV and the eye, the use of botulinum toxin in correction of strabismus and an exciting chapter on new approaches to artificial vision.

There is a great range of styles and approaches in each chapter. Douglas K Grayson contributes a chapter on "Phaco Tilt Technique: Best of Both Intracapsular and Supracapsular Techniques." The chapter consists largely of an interview with himself. A typical passage goes like: "The beauty is it's also reproducible for any type of nucleus: soft, hard, small pupil, large pupil, pseudoexfoliation, trauma, Dr Grayson said." I must say I began to wonder who Dr Grayson was addressing his remarks to.

Not only do we have this vast book; there is also the near-obligatory CD-Rom attached. Eight MPEG videos, playable in RealPlayer or any other suitable media player, feature on this extra. Each is clear and focused on a particular clinical situation. I enjoyed the gentle piano music that accompanied Amar Agarwal's lecture on "Worst Case Scenario." The music made the presentation more agreeable than one might expect from the title. Luther Fry's presentation on "Phaco in Difficult Situations" begins with a tour of the facility he works at, giving an insight into the attention to detail in the Fry Eye Center in Kansas – from the parking lot, to the video of the surgery, to the commentary provided to each patient post operatively. Most of the videos are around 12 to 14 minutes in duration. The user interacts with the CD via a PowerPoint presentation.

Because of the sheer range of contributors and nationalities involved, the overall effect is something like being at a particularly massive conference, with lots of different styles and approaches. I

found the individual touches and linguistic approaches of some of the authors – and little aspects like the generous tribute to the late Charles David Kelman at the beginning of the book – gave the book a certain life that

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is sometimes lacking in medical textbooks.

An enjoyable book, a wonderful panoramic view of the state of the art in ophthalmology, and an exemplar of North-South and West-East co-operation in medical literature – there is much to commend in this book.