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Book review

Ophthalmic Photography—a Textbook of Retinal Photography, Angiography, and Electronic Imaging. By Patrick J Saine, Marshall E Tyler. Pp 334. £87.50. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996. ISBN 0 7506 9793 8.

This textbook contains a great deal of information on ophthalmic photography, from conventional fundus photography and film processing to fluorescein angiography and digital imaging technology.

After an initial short history of ophthalmic photography and a brief description of the evolution of fluorescein angiography, the authors launch into a thorough description of the practicalities of performing fundus photography. The photographic routine is described in some detail, from seating patients correctly and dilating their pupils, to aligning the camera, obtaining the required view of the fundus, and ensuring correct focus.

Chapter 3 describes stereo photography as performed with both dedicated stereo and conventional monocular fundus cameras. The next two chapters are concerned with fluorescein angiography and include descriptions of the dye itself, as well as taking the reader step by step through the angiography procedure. Anterior segment angiography is also described briefly.

Chapter 6 contains a thorough description of the processing and printing of fluorescein angiograms, from designing the darkroom and processing the negatives to procedures for producing contact sheets and enlargements. Practical advice on the choice of suitable films, developers, and development times is also included.

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The field of electronic imaging is evolving rapidly and the current state of the art is described in chapter 7. This is mainly centred around the use of digital fundus cameras and their benefits or otherwise when compared with conventional photographic fundus cameras. The issues to consider when purchasing a digital system are discussed in some detail. These include minimum practical image resolution, potential cost, and time savings over photographic development, as well as ensuring that the images can be conveniently viewed, printed, and archived. Although the examples of commercially available cameras considered in the text are certainly up to date, these issues are discussed in a way that can be detached from the state of the art of current hardware and software. The hazards associated with the ease with which digital images may be manipulated and enhanced are also discussed. A brief description of indocyanine green angiography is given and the chapter concludes with little more than a passing reference to scanning laser ophthalmoscopy.

Chapters 8 and 9 discuss the issues involved in maximising the information content of fundus photographs and include descriptions of ocular anatomy and the appearance of common retinal and choroidal abnormalities in these images.

Ophthalmic photography is an important and highly skilled profession and this is very much a practical guide to the techniques involved in obtaining consistently informative, high quality images. It is clearly aimed squarely at the retinal photographer, containing detailed descriptions of the techniques of both fundus photography and fluorescein angiography whether performed using conventional photographic or digital imaging techniques. It is well written, amply illustrated, and contains a wealth of detailed practical information.

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