

## Anterior Eye Disease and Therapeutics A–Z, 2nd edition

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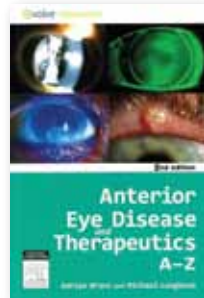
Elsevier Australia, 2011

ISBN 978 0729 539 579, \$135.00

'Anterior Eye Disease and Therapeutics' is an accessible 380 page compendium on ocular disease of the anterior segment (anatomically, from the crystalline lens forward). As the title would suggest, it is a reference book itemising disease from A to Z. Each topic is covered neatly within a two page tabloid spread, pictures included.

This book presents itself as 'a "go to" guide for therapeutic eye care clinicians'. Undoubtedly it will find popularity within the burgeoning field of therapeutic optometry – particularly as the licence for limited prescription is now incorporated into most optometry courses. Equally, a family physician with an interest in eyes is also likely to find this a valuable text.

This book provides good coverage of its field



(165 topics), including autoimmune, infections and inflammatory conditions; degenerations and dystrophies; developmental disorders; ocular surface disturbances; and neoplasia. Very rare diseases are not included unless they are well known. Each topic is presented using a similar format which covers signs and symptoms, differential diagnoses and management.

This is not a text which attempts to highlight the controversies that exist within the discipline, nor does it discuss the evidence (or lack thereof) of its treatment recommendations – a comment that should be read as an observation rather than a criticism. It is concise, and the index is thorough. These are qualities which make it an ideal quick reference source.

Worth highlighting is the first appendix which provides a well structured account of the most important medications used within the field. This includes an overview of each drug class, basic drug monographs and instructive 'notes'. It is a fine condensation of material which would

usually be confined to a hefty and unreadable pharmacology textbook. In particular, this book includes an up-to-date summary of ocular lubricants and guide to their use.

Ophthalmological texts live or die on their illustration and Bruce and Loughnan's book has a sizeable collection of images which add substantially to the text. On the whole, the quality of the images is reasonable, although the print has perhaps not done justice to some images that demonstrate subtle corneal pathology (refractive surgery signs, aconthamoeba keratitis, corneal guttatae). Some of the images dealing with less common conditions such as aniridia and Fleischer rings might also be improved in a third edition. This second edition also includes a weblink video section that demonstrates the use of slit lamp and other specialist ophthalmic instruments.

The two Australian authors have published a well written and finely designed book that would be of value in most general practices.

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## The Panic Virus: Fear, Myth and the Vaccination Debate

Seth Mnookin

Australia: Black Inc., 2011

ISBN 978 1863 955 188, \$32.95

Many would find the recent diphtheria death in Brisbane of an unvaccinated woman, 22 years of age, as incomprehensible as it is tragic. The evidence is overwhelmingly in support of vaccination and many doctors graduate without even considering that there might be an alternative view. Yet global rates of vaccination are falling and we are seeing a rise in both incidence and fatality of diseases previously thought conquered. Intriguingly, studies find the children of mothers who have not completed high school are more likely to be up-to-date with vaccinations than children of college graduates. Why is this so?

Seth Mnookin's book, 'The Panic Virus' opens with the death of a baby from pertussis at just



32 days. Being too young to be vaccinated, baby Dana relied on high background vaccination rates in her community to provide 'herd' immunity and we let her down. In contemplating this, Mnookin takes the reader on a fascinating and highly researched (95 pages of notes and references) journey through the vaccination debate that manages to be both factual and emotive. Rather than simplistically identifying the impact of recent antivaccination lobby groups; this book looks at why such groups exist and explores a history of government conspiracy, scientific fraud, nondisclosure of adverse events, organomercurial contamination and 'dancing cat' disease.

As the title suggests, a major component of this book is devoted to measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccination. Although a causal relationship with autism has been rejected following a 3 year review of the research, vaccination rates remain low. Here Mnookin considers the role of the media, placing the debate in the wider context of

commercial interests and the growth in celebrity medicine where we replace investigative journalism with the viewpoint of an individual journalist. In Seth's words, 'the type of journalism that relies on the reporter's notion of what does or doesn't "seem" correct or controversial is self indulgent and irresponsible. It gives credence to the belief that we can intuit our way through all the various decisions we need to make in our lives and validates the notion that our feelings are a more reliable barometer of reality than the facts'.

For this reason the chapter regarding Jenny McCarthy, famous for being a 'playmate of the year' and Jim Carrey's partner for 5 years, is particularly chilling. By espousing her erroneous beliefs on Oprah, Larry King Live, and Good Morning America, in 1 week alone McCarthy reached between 15 and 20 million viewers. This book helps us understand the harm that caused.

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