BOOK REVIEW

Essential Ophthalmology: A Guide for General Practitioners and Family Physicians

by Dr Michael Yee, FCFP(S), Editorial Board Member, Family Physician in Private Practice

Image courtesy of Dr Jayant Venkatramani Iyer

Like many GPs, I was pleasantly surprised to have received a parcel in the mail, containing a complimentary copy of the book ‘Essential Ophthalmology: A Guide for General Practitioners and Family Physicians’ published by the Singapore National Eye Centre, Red Cell Series. I was delighted to find that one of the authors of this impressive guide was a former Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine (GDFM) student of mine, Dr Jayant Venkatramani Iyer, who had graduated with flying colours a few years earlier. Assuming that the book was written largely with GPs and FPs in mind, I would imagine that the Family Medicine training have contributed to a more identifiable primary eye care perspective. The other co-authors are A/Prof Chee Soon Phaik and Dr Aliza Jap.

This 300-page paperback have found a place in my office bookshelf, and as the title implied, a stripped-down, succinct reference to supplement our practices. When GPs come across less commonly encountered eye conditions, the authors have included, at the end of each chapter, an additional reading segment. The chapters are categorised pathophysiologically and anatomically. Each segment is geared towards quick reference in point form. There are lots of high-quality coloured photos in familiar local context. Illustrations and algorithms are crisp, clear and concise. The book is thus very practically oriented in a typical busy GP practice. The first 3 chapters provide useful revision to bare essentials of eye anatomy, ophthalmological history taking, physical examination and approaches to common eye signs and symptoms.

On behalf of the primary care community I would like to extend a note of thanks for the generosity and thoughtful effort in publishing this book. I am sure fellow GPs, and their patients, would find this book to be helpful in their practices. In his foreword, Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan re-iterated that the centre of gravity in Medicine is not at the specialist’s clinic or cyberspace, but the best trained broad-based general practitioner. It is certainly significant to recognise this bilateral mutual exchange. I am proud to make out the Family Medicine culture being entrenched among our specialist colleagues, some of whom have taken the trouble to advance their understanding of primary care and making a contribution in return. We can be encouraged to affirmatively continue to train aspiring students in the enchanting values, science and art of Family Medicine whether they intend to become Family Physicians or pursue other professional areas of interest.

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Season’s Greetings & Happy New Year!

Best wishes,
23rd Council, Editorial Board of The College Mirror & Secretariat,
College of Family Physicians Singapore