FRCS (Ophthalmology) Cakewalk

Surviving Viva and Clinical Exam!

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Dedicated

to

My dear son, Harshal, for inspiring me to write this book

My parents, for their blessings

My husband, Brajesh, for his loving support

FOREWORD



Since the day I was asked to write a foreword for this book I was in a big dilemma; where to begin? During my relatively long career in ophthalmology, I supervised the training of many ophthalmology residents. Most of them passed their fellowship exams and are now enjoying important positions in various locations. They always had a problem of what to study. Should they concentrate on one textbook? Or is it better to select certain topics from several sources? Then comes the big question; how to quick run through all the topics before they take an important test that can change their lives forever. When I took my fellowship exam I was torn among lots of textbooks, handwritten hints and self-prepared printed notes, only to find I could have done better. There were many books written to help, but only a few were satisfactory.

When I began reading this book I was impressed by the great effort and patience the author had to endure to bring to life her wonderful creation. The easy-to-go-through chapters and the way the book has been organized reflect her deep comprehension and her multitask thinking.

This book enjoys a high degree of organization, an easy way to find a topic, and a step-by-step approach. Not only it covers almost everything you need to know for ophthalmology viva but also provides a great help for questions that are frequently asked in general medicine pertaining to ophthalmology. The art of how to write an essay has been beautifully explained. The examination techniques described in a chapter are near to perfection.

As an examiner in two Royal Colleges I often find that ocular motility is a subject feared by many candidates. Many would fail to elicit the necessary signs and would interpret what they saw as a complicated motility disorder while with a more organized and more simple diagnosis would have been made. Thanks to this book; this problem should now be easily conquered. In addition, exam aspirants can discuss viva questions and case scenarios among themselves to have a real time experience of the exam.

I believe this book will be a great help to ophthalmologists wishing to revise their knowledge and a wonderful aid for candidates taking their fellowship exams.

Yaser Habrawi FRCS Ed
Former Head of Syrian Ophthalmology Society
FRCS (Ophthalmology) Examiner

PREFACE

This refreshingly new book has been written with study materials from notes, lectures and reference books, compiled during my preparation for several postgraduate examinations in ophthalmology. As I passed through the different phases of my training in this field and presented myself for the different clinical examinations; I felt an uncompromising need to have a one-stop shop to crack all these examinations successfully.

I noticed during my preparations that most of the available books were based on providing long lists of differential diagnoses; more often than not these were just the summaries of the existing textbooks. Clinical and viva examinations are a different ball game altogether. Textbooks and their synopses only help to write the regular answers to the standard questions and provide a good basic knowledge. The textbooks drastically fail to help in approaching the practical part of the target examination.

This void prompted me to write a clinically oriented, interesting and easy to read book. Taking cue from my own exams and difficulties faced during the journey; I have attempted to present relevant facts in a manner that facilitates rather than burdens the memory. It does not provide you all the overburdened textbook details and facts, which are neither required nor appropriate for practical exam. It is certainly not a substitute for the textbook—though I believe this book will be of invaluable help to the senior postgraduate students aspiring to walk through several postgraduate examinations in ophthalmology with ease.

This book provides a broad-based review for the final year ophthalmology residents taking the specialist ophthalmology exams, particularly for exams with a strong emphasis on oral or viva component. Although primarily aimed at candidates attempting the British postgraduate exams (FRCS, MRCS, MRCOphth and FRCOphth); it will be equally useful for any other such examination systems, e.g. American Boards, OKAP, DNB. In addition, many junior residents may also find this book very informative for practical tips.

The style and format of this book is didactic. The information and key facts that are considered relevant only from an examination perspective have been covered. Topics that may have scientific and academic value, but are not commonly asked in the exams, have intentionally not been much emphasized. I am confident that examinees would find it a crisp guide with enough information to serve as the main revision book and imbibe the contents suitably as they are nearer the exams.

Mamta Mittal

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I am also thankful to all my friends, well-wishers and mentors who have always believed me.

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TIPS TO SUCCEED IN ORAL EXAM

- Believe in Yourself !
- You need to feel as comfortable as possible, psychologically as well as physically.
- Be courteous to examiner as well as your patient.
- Listen to question carefully and answer while looking into eyes of examiner. Answer must be well composed and short but comprehensive.
- Describe image/picture and demonstrate clinical findings clearly and confidently. Do not create any doubt in your answer.
- Be ready with common differential diagnosis.
- Intend to inquire about history, other findings and tests done to narrow down the differentials.
- Then focus on working diagnosis, plan to assess and manage, including conservative treatment alternatives.
- Do not forget patient and family education, drug side effects, genetic counselling, follow-up plans, and the prognosis of the disease in your management plan.
- Offer to consult seniors and other physicians of different specialities, if required for continuity of care.
- Always lead the examiner to the next question yourself !
- Practice coping with the more predictable opening questions. Examiners are always impressed by insight.
- Tailor your revision style to the exam style, practice questions and answers, and remember that the examiners really want you to do well.