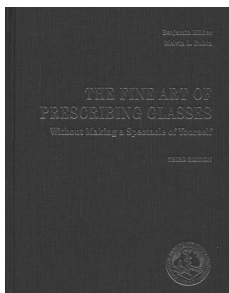


BOOK REVIEWS

The Fine Art of Prescribing Glasses—Without Making a Spectacle of Yourself, 3rd Ed.



*Benjamin Milder
and Melvin L.
Rubin Triad
Publishing
Company,
Gainesville,
Florida, 2004,
\$88.00*

This book is an excellent compendium for prescribing glasses. Unlike typical courses in ophthalmic optics that teach spectacles beginning with optics, this book teaches from the clinical management point of view with sprinklings of optics as appropriate. The subject matter is mostly organized around patient conditions. The authors have considerable respect for refraction and proper refractive correction, even cautioning against heavy reliance on autorefractor findings. The book contains considerable clinical wisdom that is usually taught only by long experience in the trenches.

Before reviewing the content of the book, I am compelled to say that the writing style of the authors is unique, conversational, and easy to read. There are numerous tongue-in-cheek comments that communicate well and are also entertaining.

The first several chapters are organized around patients with basic refractive conditions, including hyperopia, accommodation, myopia, astigmatism, presbyopia, muscle imbalances, and anisometropia. Each of these topics is covered systematically. For example, spectacle correction for hyperopia is appropriately organized by patient age. Each age group is presented with at least one and usually several case studies. Prescribing for hyperopia can be challenging, and the authors do an excellent job of presenting intriguing case examples that illustrate the interplay between patient symptoms, job demands, accommodation, astigmatism, and psychological considerations. They discuss when and

how to use cycloplegia, when to use trial frame, optional refractive techniques, accommodative testing techniques, muscle balance issues, and lens effectivity among others.

For each of the other refractive conditions, the authors likewise provide an organized, thorough, and clinically insightful presentation. There is an excellent discussion about various treatments for myopia progression. The discussion does not reference the scientific literature on the subject; however, the authors are clearly familiar with the literature. Their conclusions are sound: the long-term use of cycloplegia is too steep a price to pay for marginal results; bifocals or progressive addition lenses (PAL's) have a small effect; and myopia is mostly guided by our genes. The astigmatism chapter contains interesting discussions about when to undercut the prescription or to alter the axis. These discussions are based on their considerable clinical experience—they have been observant and willing to learn from patients with whom they were initially unsuccessful.

The chapter on presbyopia also includes prescribing bifocals for children. They discuss numerous aspects of presbyopia, including methods for determining the add, contact lens corrections, over-the-counter readers, reading in bed, the need for intermediate vision, anisometropia and the problems of downward gaze, and unequal accommodation and adds. They also do a commendable job of presenting the advantages and disadvantages of the various bifocal types.

There are separate chapters for PAL's and occupational lenses. Both chapters emphasize the importance of understanding the needs of the patient and selecting the optical design that best meets those needs. The coverage of PAL's is extensive and includes some manufacturer-provided information about the lenses. There is good coverage of double segments; however, only two short paragraphs are allotted to occupational progressive lenses. This important lens category calls for considerably greater information.

The chapter on anisometropia provides good clinical coverage of Knapp's law, spectacle magnification, and contact lens and spectacle correction. The discussion is clinically relevant with an accurate yet not overbearing presentation of mathematical relationships. Shape and power nomograms for determining spectacle magnification are included. There is an extensive discussion, with supporting case examples, of various anisometropic prescribing decisions.

Subsequent chapters address spectacle management for patients with particular conditions, such as cataract, aphakia, pseudophakia, refractive surgery, contact lenses, and special medical conditions that have refractive implications. The chapter on cataracts includes refractive and spectacle considerations for congenital cataract, the various types of cataracts, and monocular cataract. Near vision problems are discussed. The chapter on refractive surgery discusses patient selection with considerable emphasis on considerations of the preoperative type and magnitude of refractive error. Complications of postoperative refractive care are also discussed. The chapter on contact lenses emphasizes visual and refractive complications, such as spectacle blur, spectacle overcorrection, and presbyopia. The authors also discuss some aspects of fitting contact lenses, such as lens type and prescribing contact lenses for age groups, refractive error types, aphakia, anisometropia, and irregular refractive errors. Although it is a thin line to walk, the authors do well at discussing the refractive issues concerning contact lenses without making it a chapter on how to fit contact lenses.

The chapter on absorptive lenses begins with discussion of the ophthalmic materials: tints, antireflection properties, polarization, mirror coatings, and photochromic lenses. This is followed by a discussion of a few medical conditions, with case examples for which tints are useful. The chapter on the partially sighted patient provides a nice overview of low vision treatment options. This chapter would be

satisfying to the general practitioner (for whom the book is written!) but not for the low vision specialist.

The final three chapters provide a fitting end to the book by discussing the psychological aspects of wearing glasses, dispensing, and troubleshooting problems. They unabashedly state that “dispensing is an art” and that problems in the fit of the glasses can be particularly vexing and override the benefits of a good refractive prescription. They cover numerous problems and their management concerning the mechanics of the frames fitting on the face

and visual adaptation problems that arise. The authors have clearly been directly involved with troubleshooting these types of problems.

The authors have a wealth of clinical experience that they have applied to this book. This is the third edition, so they have been building this information for some time. I have not seen another book that even comes close to covering the topic of “prescribing glasses” as does this one. This book would be useful in ophthalmologic and optometric training programs. In optometry curricula, it fits

better into clinical management courses than optics courses. Practitioners would also find the book useful and would particularly enjoy the cleverly written quips about patient management. We have all had similar thoughts, and it is refreshing and entertaining to see them in writing.

The authors have provided us with a good book—I thank them.

James E. Sheedy

*The Ohio State University
College of Optometry
Columbus, Ohio*