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## IN MEMORIAM

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### Jan Kok (1952-1998)

At the age of 46 the Dutch ophthalmologist Jan Kok died on 21 November 1998. Jan did not survive complications associated with a bone marrow transplant he received to treat the multiple myeloma from which he suffered. He was trained as an ophthalmologist at the Rotterdam Eye Hospital and started his career as head of the contact lens department of the Academic Medical Centre in Amsterdam. His research in this field resulted in a PhD thesis entitled "New developments in the field of contact lenses" which was widely distributed. With his ambitions in anterior segment surgery he followed in the footsteps of his mother, Clariet Kok- van Alphen, the pioneer of corneal transplantations in the Netherlands. Like his mother, Jan was an innovative person continuously trying to implement new techniques and procedures to improve the efficiency in both the outpatient department as well as in the operating theatre. The bureaucracy of a university department of ophthalmology did not allow Jan to fulfil his dreams and in 1993 he joined a private hospital, the "Jan van Gooyen" clinic in Amsterdam. With a small team an extremely efficient procedure for cataract surgery and aftercare was developed and although private hospitals were not officially recognised by the government, a contract was signed with the local health insurance agency to clear the long waiting lists for cataract patients.

Besides developing his skills as an anterior segment surgeon he kept a strong interest in the contact lens field with an emphasis on the use of contact lenses for therapeutic purposes. He was active in the organisation of meetings and, although he was already ill, he played an important role in the organisation of the satellite contact lens symposium held jointly with the 1998 International Congress of Ophthalmology in Amsterdam. Many people enjoyed working with him, because he showed an interest in individuals irrespective of their background and admired them for their personal skills. He was a strong advocate of a close collaboration between ophthalmologists and optometrists and opticians. Many worked very closely with him in various facets of the care for the elderly cataract patient. Jan had a special way to show his gratitude, independent of whether you were a secretary, nurse, or colleague. It was not a simple "thank you"; he gave you the feeling you had done something very special for him and would often accompany it with a funny postcard.

Jan was not only interested in the treatment of patients in his own country, but was also committed to the treatment of blindness globally. Soon after finishing his training as an ophthalmologist he often went to Nepal to operate on patients in remote mountain areas. Together with Nepalese ophthalmologists he helped improve the local organisation to treat blindness. Back in Holland he had developed an original way to fund this programme. Each cataract operation he performed was taped on a video and patients were able to buy the tape, whereby that income, together with extra donations, went into the special "Nepal fund" Jan had organised.

With the number of cataracts Jan performed in the last years of his life, a substantial amount of money was collected. The fund was used to train local personnel, organise cataract workshops, and support a local eye bank. His goal to improve eye care for poor people will continue thanks to the fund that now carries his name.

AIZE KIJLSTRA

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Principles and Applications of Intraocular Gas.** By Mark M Whitacre. Pp 402. £99, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1997. ISBN 0-7506-9713-X.

This beautifully illustrated 400 page book attempts to summarise the use of intraocular gases in ophthalmology. It is divided into 18 chapters ranging from the basic properties of gases through a variety of clinical uses of intraocular gas. The basic science is extremely useful, if not a little daunting, for this reviewer. The clinical section covers all aspects of vitreoretinal surgery as one would expect and also touches on some admittedly historical uses of gas in cataract and glaucoma surgery, the latter two being hidden in the last two chapters. As one would expect from an American textbook, there is a considerable amount of space spent on pneumatic retinopathy and, unsurprisingly to this British reviewer, very little spent on the D-ACE procedure. The list of complications of intraocular gas which is included in each of the chapters is a little repetitive and there is also a fair amount of cross referencing to previous chapters, which is slightly irritating.

Overall, however, I can thoroughly recommend this textbook, perhaps not for individuals but for all ophthalmic departments with a vitreoretinal interest and many of the chapters will be of great use to those juniors about to embark upon professional examinations.

P S BAINES

**Textbook of Glaucoma.** By M Bruce Shields. 4th ed. Pp 588; £85. Philadelphia: Williams and Wilkins, 1997. ISBN 0683-07693-0.

This is the 4th edition of Bruce Shields' excellent book, appearing about 5 years after the last edition. The text has been thoroughly revised and as noted in the preface 2300 original papers have been reviewed for this edition with 1440 new references incorporated into the text. For the first time a companion volume entitled *Colour Atlas of Glaucoma* has been produced which was not available for review. The text and photographs follow the same order in the two volumes.

Since the third edition there have been major changes in the understanding of many of the glaucomas particularly with regard to the factors responsible for causing the optic nerve head damage. This is reflected in a new classification which is based on the new concepts of mechanism, diagnosis, and therapy.

The layout of the book remains, as in previous editions, divided into three sections.

Section one deals with the basic aspects of glaucoma and covers the essentials of anatomy and physiology with good chapters on the optic nerve head and visual field testing.

The second part is a description of the clinical forms of glaucoma and is thorough and comprehensive. More time is devoted to chronic open angle glaucoma and normal tension glaucoma than in previous editions and some of the new concepts are considered. This section gives an excellent review of what used to be called the secondary glaucomas.

The final part "The management of glaucoma" is a very up to date account and assessment of all the treatment modalities available, again with a strong clinical emphasis.

As with all books there are some small criticisms. A few topics such as plateau iris get relatively scant attention compared with some other less common conditions. Surprisingly little mention is made of the attempts at neuroprotection now taking place in the treatment of glaucoma. However, in a book that attempts to cover such a large subject some selection has to be made and this has been generally well done. It is detailed enough to be of real clinical use and contains a wealth of practical advice. Being written by one author there is a coherent feel and I enjoyed reading it.

Overall this is a superb book that deserves its reputation as a standard textbook on glaucoma. It contains most of what the ophthalmologist needs to know for day to day practice and is an ideal text for those in training.

FRANK D GREEN

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## NOTICES

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### Blindness in children

The latest issue of the *Community Eye Health* (no 27) discusses blindness in children, with an editorial by Allen Foster, medical director of the Christoffel Blindenmission and articles on blind schools, problems of examining children with visual loss, optical services, and integrated education. For further information please contact *Community Eye Health*, International Centre for Eye Health, Institute of Ophthalmology, 11-43 Bath Street, London EC1V 9EL. (Tel: (+44) 171 608 6910; fax: (+44) 171 250 3207; email: [eyesource@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:eyesource@ucl.ac.uk)) Annual subscription £25. Free to workers in developing countries.

### Residents' Foreign Exchange Programme

Any resident interested in spending a period of up to one month in departments of ophthalmology in the Netherlands, Finland, Ireland, Germany, Denmark, France, Austria, or Portugal should apply to: Mr Robert Acheson, Secretary of the Foreign Exchange Committee, European Board of Ophthalmology, Institute of Ophthalmology, University College Dublin, 60 Eccles Street, Dublin 7, Ireland.

### XVIII Tuebingen Detachment course:

#### Retinal and Vitreous Surgery

The XVIII Tuebingen Detachment course: Retinal and Vitreous Surgery will be held 8-9 April 1999 at the lecture hall "Kupferbau" of

the University, Gmelinstrasse 8, 72076 Tuebingen, Germany. Further details: Congress-Secretariat (T), Professor I Kreissig, Augenhilfkunde III, Schleichstrasse 12, D-72076 Tuebingen, Germany. (Fax: +49-7071-293746; email: [ingrid.kreissig@uni-tuebingen.de](mailto:ingrid.kreissig@uni-tuebingen.de))

#### ARVO 1999 annual meeting

The 1999 annual meeting of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology will take place on 9–14 May 1999 in Fort Lauderdale Convention Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Further details: ARVO, 9650 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20814-3998, USA. (Tel: (301) 571-1844; fax: (301) 571-8311.)

#### 12th Annual Meeting of German Ophthalmic Surgeons

The 12th annual meeting of German Ophthalmic Surgeons will be held on 10–13 June 1999 at the Meistersingerhalle, Nürnberg, Germany. Further details: MCN Medizinische Congress-Organisation Nürnberg GmbH, Weilandstrasse 6, D-90419 Nürnberg, Germany. (Tel: ++49-911-3931621; fax: ++49-911-3931620; email: [doerflinger@mcn-nuernberg.de](mailto:doerflinger@mcn-nuernberg.de))

#### Royal National Institute for the Blind

A national conference of the Royal National Institute for the Blind will be held on 22–23 June 1999 at the Cedar Court Hotel, Wakefield. Further details: Kristene Wilde, Conference administrator, Royal National Institute for the Blind, RNIB Education Centre: North, Grosvenor House, Grosvenor Road, Leeds LS6 2DZ (tel: 0113-274 8855; fax: 0113-274 8800).

#### XII Congress European Society of Ophthalmology

The XII Congress European Society of Ophthalmology will be held in Stockholm, Sweden on 27 June–1 July 1999. Further details: Congress (Sweden) AB, PO Box 5819, S-114 86 Stockholm, Sweden. (Tel: +46 8 459 66 00; fax: +46 8 661 91 25; email: [soe@congreg.se](mailto:soe@congreg.se); <http://www.congreg.com/soe/>)

#### Vision '99: International Conference on Low Vision and Vision Rehabilitation

The International Conference on Low Vision and Vision Rehabilitation will be held on 12–16 July 1999 at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City, New York. Further details: Lighthouse International, 111 East 59th Street, New York, NY 10022-1202, USA. (Tel: (212) 821-9482; fax: (212) 821-9705; email: [vision99@lighthouse.org](mailto:vision99@lighthouse.org))

#### 4th Meeting of the European Neuro-Ophthalmology Society

The 4th meeting of the European Neuro-Ophthalmology Society will be held on 29 August–2 September 1999 in Jerusalem, Israel. Further details: Secretariat, 4th Meeting of the European Neuro-Ophthalmology Society, PO Box 50006, Tel Aviv, 61500, Israel. (Tel: 972-3-514000; fax: 972-3-5175674/972-3-5140077; email: [Eunos99@kenes.com](mailto:Eunos99@kenes.com))

#### International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness

The sixth general assembly of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness will be held on 5–6 September 1999 at the Conference Centre, Beijing Friendship Hotel, Beijing, People's Republic of China. The theme is "The right to sight". Further

details: IAPB Secretariat, LV Prasad Eye Institute, LV Prasad Marg, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500 034, India, (Tel: 091-40-215389; fax: 091-40-248271; email: [IAPB@lvpeye.stph.net](mailto:IAPB@lvpeye.stph.net))

#### Ophthalmological Clinic, University of Creteil

An international symposium on the macula will be held on 1–2 October 1999 at the Ophthalmological Clinic, University of Creteil. Further details: Professor G Soubrane, Chef de Service, Clinique Ophtalmologique Universitaire de Creteil, Centre Hospitalier Intercommunal, 40 Avenue de Verdun, 94010 Creteil, France. Fax: 01 45 17 52 27.

#### Jules François Prize

The 2000 Jules François Prize of \$100 000 for scientific research in ophthalmology will be awarded to a young scientist who has made an important contribution to ophthalmology. All topics in the field of fundamental and/or clinical research in ophthalmology will be considered. The application should be sent jointly with a curriculum vitae, the list of all publications, and three copies of the candidate's 10 most relevant publications to Jules François Foundation Secretary, Professor Dr M Hanssens, Dienst Oogheelkunde, de Pintelaan 185, B-9000 Gent, Belgium. Deadline for applications 31 December 1999.

#### DR-2000, International Forum on Diabetic Retinopathy

The International Forum on Diabetic Retinopathy will take place on 7–9 September 2000 at the Palazzo Reale, Naples, Italy. Further details: Francesco Bandello, Congress Secretariat, MGR Congressi, Via Servio Tullio, 4, 20123 Milano, Italy (tel: 39 02 430071; fax: 39 02 48008471; email: [dr2000@mgr.it](mailto:dr2000@mgr.it)).

### *British Journal of Ophthalmology* - <http://www.bjophthalmol.com>

Visitors to the world wide web can now access the *British Journal of Ophthalmology* either through the BMJ Publishing Group's home page (<http://www.bmjgroup.com>) or directly by using its individual URL (<http://www.bjophthalmol.com>). There they will find the following:

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A hotlink gives access to:

The web site is at a preliminary stage and there are plans to develop it into a more sophisticated site. Suggestions from visitors about features they would like to see are welcomed. They can be left via the opening page of the BMJ Publishing Group site or, alternatively, via the journal page, through "about this site".



## Jan Kok (1952–1998)

AIZE KIJLSTRA

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Updated information and services can be found at:  
<http://bjo.bmj.com/content/83/4/506.1.full.html>

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