

BOOK REVIEW

UNDERSTANDING COMMON EYE PROBLEMS - A TREATMENT GUIDE

AUTHORS: EFE S. ODJIMOGHO O.D FNCO & STELLA E. ODJIMOGHO OD

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REVIEWER: PROF UCHE IKONNE

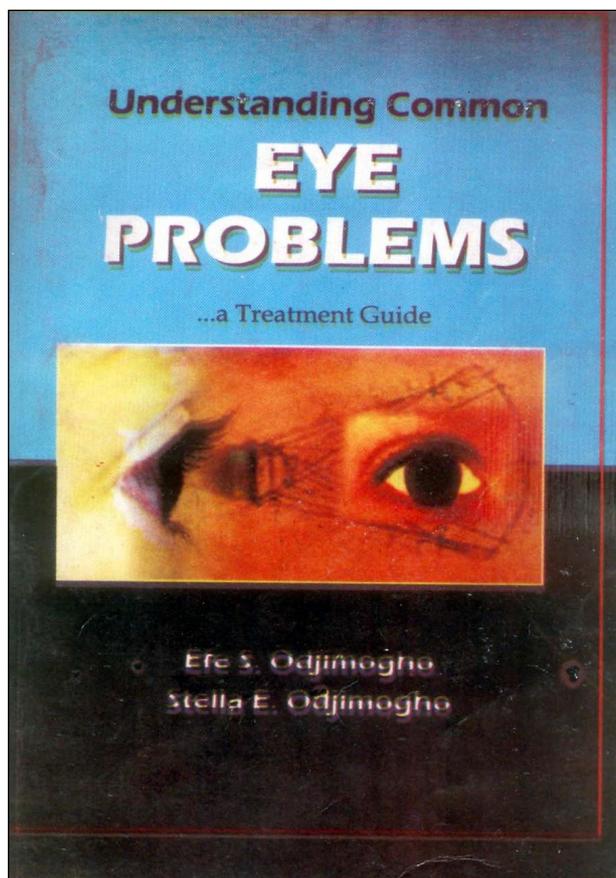
Title of this book quickly suggests the targeted reading community, which is made up of professionals in Eye-care service and the general public. Understandably, there are two identifiable parts of this title, firstly, the understanding of common Eye problems; secondly the guide to the treatment of those common Eye problems. The first part probably is for the benefit of the general public while latter acts both as a clinical guide to the practitioner and as an assurance to the patient that the practitioner has adopted the correct line of treatment for his eye problem. It is important to note this, especially for the practitioner who may think that the title would have more appropriately read "Management of common ocular problems".

PREFACE:

This page let us into the mind-set of the authors in embarking on writing this book. From here we discover that the book is divided into four main parts. The first part introduces the general public to the structures that make up the organ called the Eye. The second part treats refractive errors, which can only be managed with the use of lenses and not drugs. The authors referred to them as "Non medical problems of the Eye". The third part treats pathological cases of the eye, which can only be relieved, with the use of drugs and/or surgery. The authors referred to them as "common medical problems of the eye". The fourth part deals specially with specialty areas of Optometrists. In all these parts the authors endeavoured to accommodate the targeted reading community in the use of language and terminology. This they admitted in the preface, when they wrote, "the book is written in simple user-friendly language different from what would be found in regular texts in optometry and ophthalmology. Technical terms are used only when they are unavoidable, the main objective being to demystify eye problems in general and their specific form(s) of treatment in particular". It will be interesting to know if this set objective would be achieved!

INTRODUCTION

The introduction occupies eight (8) pages of this book because the authors did not just introduce the book as a suit but went further to illustrate some basic psychological misconceptions arising from the use of eye glasses. Hence such rhetoric questions as "Eyeballs shrink from prolong use of



glasses?" "Regular use of glasses could spoil eyes?" appeared as sub-heading. In answering these questions, the authors successfully explained the psychological phenomena that lead to the erroneous conception that the eyeballs of those who wear glasses all the time tend to shrink or become smaller in size and that regular use of glasses will eventually damage one's eyes. I am particularly impressed by the use of simple

language and illustrations here in order to reach the mind of the layman who might want to use this to discourage patients from the use of eye glasses where it is indicated. This according to the authors has given rise to situations where patient with refractive errors, which obviously, can only be relieved by the use of prescribed lenses, have requested that they be given drugs to 'correct' their visual anomalies. Every eye-care practitioner must have encountered this situation severally in one's practice. We shall also find in the introduction, the different forms of lens prescriptions. My attention is drawn to the amblyopic lenses, which according to the authors are prescribed to 're-awaken', the retina of what they have classified as 'lazy Eye'. I am highlighting this classification for the interest of those who might prefer the term 'Weak Eye' and reserve the term 'Lazy Eye' only for the eye that lags behind while the other is pulled to a direction of fixation, due to weakness of any of its extrinsic muscles. In general, the introduction has richly addressed the mind-boggling questions of the suspicious patients as it affects the clinical judgment of the practitioner.

PART 1:

This part is made up of two chapters divided into External and Internal structure of the eyeball. The two chapters are devoted to the description of the Basic Anatomy of the eyeball. The external structures are those that can be observed during external examination while the internal structure can be observed with basic instruments and some expertise.

The authors gave simple but vivid description of the anatomical parts of eyeball with annotated diagrams to facilitate its understanding. In some cases they strayed into the physiology of these parts like the ocular muscles. This part 1 is very academically informative to the student of optometry and therefore comes handy for quick reference. This part also gives a mental picture of what structure make up the organ of the eye to layman and thereby prepares his mind on how they function to bring about comfortable vision. I quite sympathize with the authors in these two chapters because they must have thought of using literary words or terms to substitute for some of those anatomical terms in order to achieve the earlier set objective of 'demystifying the eye problem'. Unfortunately the anatomical parts, must be described by their scientific names like the lacrimal apparatus must be called by its name and not 'the water system of the eye' or the optic

chiasma must be labeled optic chiasma, and not 'the crossroads or junction of the eyes'.

PARTS II:

This part contains four chapters. Each chapter is devoted to particular visual anomaly. Three of them are specifically refractive errors examples are astigmatism, myopia and hyperopia. The fourth anomaly results from gradual failure of the accommodative mechanism mostly due to the aging process and is called presbyopia. In each case, the authors gave the discussion of the aetiologies and development of these visual anomalies. These discussions helped them to prove to reading public that these cases can only be relieved with use of prescribed lenses and not drug, hence they have referred to this part as 'Non-medical problem of the Eye'. In these presentations, the authors expressed ideas to accommodate all segments of the reading community example, the idea that most cases of myopia is inherited, is perhaps to accommodate the general public who may have observed that short-sightedness or myopia tends to 'run in families'. Perhaps, if they were writing for practitioners only, the idea would have been experienced that what one inherits are the predisposing factors to myopia example weak sclera.

PART III:

This part made up eight (8) chapters. Understandingly, it is the most voluminous part of the book as the authors discussed the many and varied pathological conditions of the various parts of the eyeball ranging from the eyelids to the internal structures including the disorders of the extrinsic muscles. The discussion on systemic disorders with ocular manifestation is of great public health interest and therefore recommended for general reading, which I consider of primary importance to employers of labour to the extent that they will be motivated to provide protective eye wears for their factory workers. This will help prevent ocular occupational hazards like chemical burns and all other types of injuries to the eye. This part contains the last three chapters of the book, which the authors called 'some specialty areas'. These specialty areas are really exclusive of the optometric practice, contact lens practice and production and fitting of prosthetic eye. The authors have elaborately discussed the Low Vision Patients, providing four definite conditions for recognizing the low vision patients. They went further to categorize low vision patients into five

main classes depending on the descriptions of visual loss. This chapter ends with pictures and descriptions of rehabilitative devices available for the low vision patients.

The next chapter on contact lenses makes interesting reading as the authors dug deep into history, to discuss the evolution of contact lenses, dating back to A.D, 1508. The rich information on contact lenses contained in this chapter is so vividly presented to reassure the reluctant contact lens patient and to increase the population of contact lens wearers, even for cosmetic reasons.

PART IV:

The last chapter of this book very appropriately deals with the production and fitting of artificial eye. It is appropriate because if all efforts made to keep the injured eyeball quiet in the socket, fail, then enucleation is effected. The indication for the fitting of artificial eye in this situation, according to the authors, is for the cosmetic reasons of maintaining the facial appearance of the patient.

In general, the authors, Efe and Stella have earned my sincere commendation for successfully and comprehensively compressing about four academic sessions' course into these 207 pages of work. The topics were presented in professional sequence, using as much as possible, every language, to accommodate both the professional and non-professional reader of the book. The 45 picture and illustrations are eloquent testimonies of

the effort exerted by the authors to enhance the understanding of the common Eye problem. With these sterling qualities, this book provides a quick learning, and revision material for the student of optometry. It acts as a "Desk Reference" for the practicing optometrists and challenges the intellect of the general public.

I now recall that these authors, with all good intentions, had set the objective of "demystifying eye problems in general and their form(s) of treatment in particular". If demystification here means that this book could act as a "Home Doctor" in the management of common eye problem for the general public, it might be too risky, but this book has narrowed the gap earlier existing between the clinical judgment of the eye-care practitioner and the inquisitive mind of the suspicious patient. This is a milestone!

Finally, it is worthy of mention that at this time in Nigeria when most couple spend their time bickering over unbalanced domestic budget occasioned by high cost of petroleum products, this couple, Dr. Efe and DR. (Mrs.) Stella Odjimogho rather had enough time to produce this piece of intellectual harvest. It has therefore added a new positive dimension to the marriage institution, which will encourage those who are reluctant to get into it and discourage those who are thinking of getting out of it.

Thank you.