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Ophthalmology Pearls of Wisdom, 1st Edition

THE ITEM

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> *...EXCELLENT INFORMATION PRESENTED SUPERBLY ...we would like to say that this book should be read by everyone preparing for exams. Instead of keeping it for last minute revision, we would suggest it should be kept handy at all times to brush up one's knowledge while going through daily chores. A group discussion using this book is a very convenient way of memorizing the answers given in it. In spite of the glitters it is an extremely useful book to be utilized for exam preparation...*

Ophthalmology Pearls of Wisdom, 1st Edition by Richard R. Tamesis, Brian Mulrooney. Softcover, 10.8" x 8.2" x 0.7".
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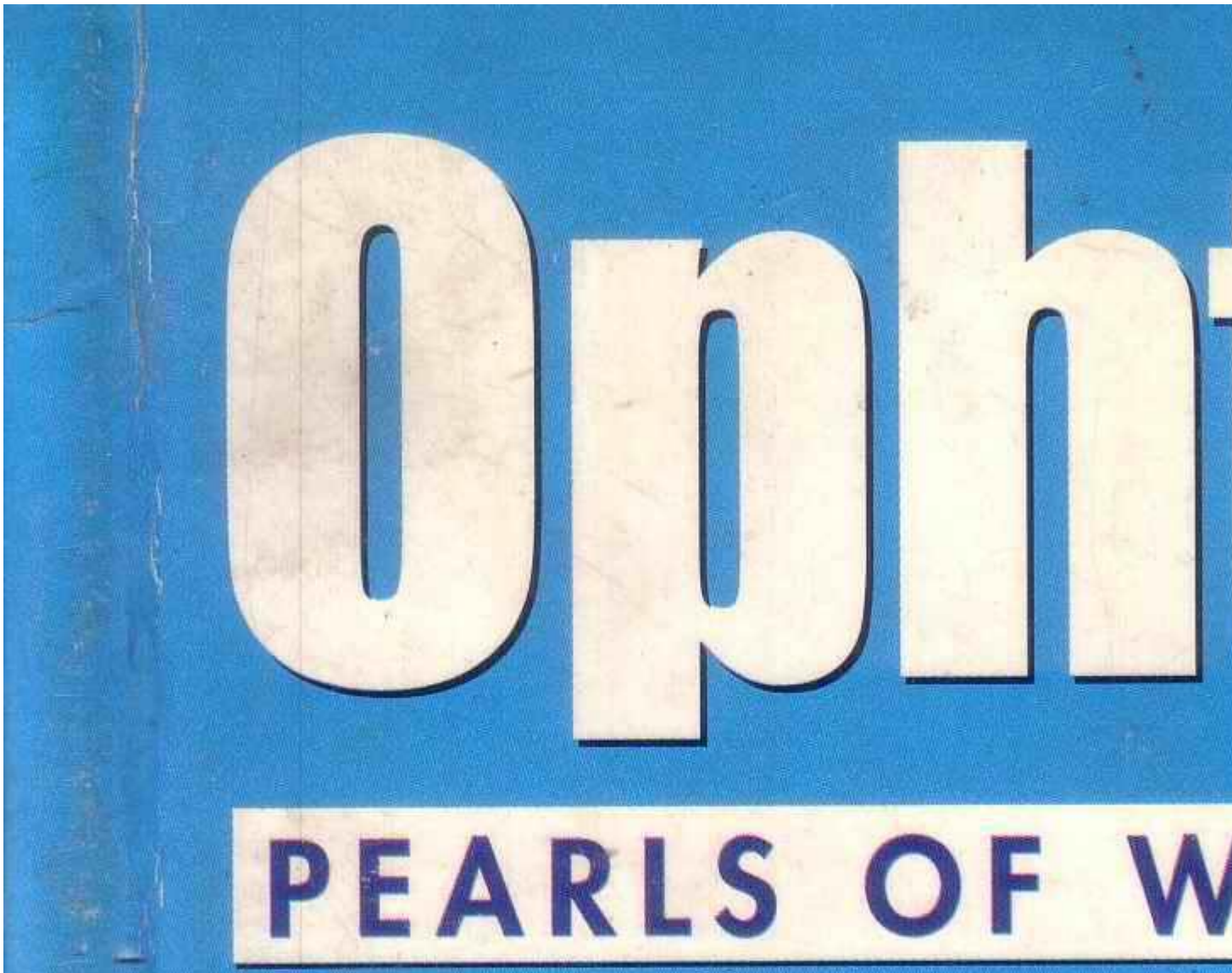
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Pearls of Wisdom is a series of books involving various branches of medical profession like clinical, Para clinical, nursing etc. the rese3nt book is about ophthalmology. The author has written this book for physicians preparing for various examinations like Boards, Recertification exams, Rotation reviews etc. he has kept it in the form of question & answer thereby helping in the last minute revisions required at the time of examinations. As he himself mentions in the introduction " the book is meant for rapid review of Ophthalmology principles and serves as a study aid to improve performance on Ophthalmology written and practical examinations." Keeping this in mind I went through the book pretending that my exams were just round the corner.

The first of note is the division of the book into twelve chapters. Most standard textbooks are usually divided into same twelve chapters. So this division is done keeping in mind the textbooks. Another good thing about this division is that most books of this nature usually do not make such divisions. Instead they just write the questions and answers without categorizing them into various chapters. This is always very confusing for the student as he is not able to concentrate on those topics in which he is not confident. Thus this division helps the examinee to concentrate more on weak topics.

When I started going through the questions a difficulty that I faced was the absence of any references from where I could countercheck the answers. The concept of a quick revision is defeated if I have to spend hours searching textbooks for clarifications. I think along with every question there should be a reference regarding the place from where that answer could be counterchecked. It is practically impossible to cover each and every question one can encounter in only one textbook and this book is no exception. So when a person refers to a book to look for one answer, he invariably goes through one or two paragraphs or the whole page. As a result not one but many related questions are prepared in a short time. This adds on a person's knowledge without wasting much time and thus increases his confidence level.

> *...One thing that impressed us a lot was the absence of any wrong answers. Usually in a book of this magnitude, one encounters quite a few wrong answers. But in this book we were hard pressed to find any wrong answers. This gives the reader the confidence to trust the author and accept the answers as correct blindly. This prevents the unnecessary wasting of time in searching for the answers and counterchecking them...*

Every textbook has some topics described in great detail and some in not so depth. If references are provided the student does not have to look at different books to search which topic is described the best in which book. He can straightway see the answer in the reference mentioned. This saves valuable time especially during examinations when there is severe time constraint. This is another reason why references should have been mentioned.

On reading further we noticed that the author has done a decent job in compiling the questions. Every chapter has been given due importance and weight age. The information given in each chapter seems adequate. Nowhere does one feel that a certain topic / section could have been handled in a better way. The author has done a neat balancing act by including questions that are frequently asked and those that are not so frequently asked. But I feel that there should have been some sort of a grading system to indicate the relative importance of every question. This usually comes very handy during last minute revisions as it tells about the importance of each question thereby indicating the time one has to spend on each question / topic.

One thing that impressed us a lot was the absence of any wrong answers. Usually in a book of this magnitude, one encounters quite a few wrong answers. But in this book we were hard pressed to find any wrong answers. This gives the reader the confidence to trust the author and accept the answers as correct blindly. This prevents the unnecessary wasting of time in searching for the answers and counterchecking them. It also speaks highly of the author indicating that he has done a lot of research in compiling this book. This we feel is the biggest advantage and achievement of this book. But this doesn't mean that references after each question are not required. They are still very important for the reasons we have already mentioned.

The format of the book is very nice. The author has tried to keep this interesting and seems to have succeeded in his endeavor. At no point in going through this book does one feel bored. The book is specially suited for reading during coffee breaks and leisure time. Its interesting style helps to discuss it in a group. When I discussed about this book with my peers, they were more comfortable in discussing it in a group rather than studying it individually. After a hard day's work one can sit with his friends with this book. It serves a double purpose of both refreshing oneself and improving the knowledge.

Every coin has two faces. Similarly every good work has a flip side. When too much information is tried to be given in a limited space, as is done in this book, the compromise is made in explanation of answers. At many places one feels that the answer given in the form of a word or a sentence is not enough. It is felt that at least a few lines should have been mentioned about that condition so that it helps to understand that condition, instead of simply memorizing the answer. This is specially useful when the same question is asked in a different way. In those cases the question can be answered correctly only if the person is fully aware of that entity. As a result the author's emphasis on "memorizing" as mentioned in the introduction can at times be counterproductive.

In the end we would like to say that this book should be read by everyone preparing for exams. Instead of keeping it for last minute revision, we would suggest it should be kept handy at all times to brush up one's knowledge while going through daily chores. A group discussion using this book is a very convenient way of memorizing the answers given in it. In spite of the glitters it is an extremely useful book to be utilized for exam preparation.

Review by *-Puneet Setia and Avneesh Gupta*





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