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Reading and the ophthalmologist. An introduction into the complex phenomenon of ordinary reading as a guideline for analysis and treatment of disabled readers.

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Abstract

Reading problems are a frequent source of complaint in ophthalmological practice. In many cases suitable optical correction is all that is needed. However, difficulties may remain despite adequate optical correction. This paper describes visual reading processes with the aim of making such difficulties understood and, if possible, providing remedies. Four different types of visual reading processes are distinguished: (a) optical imaging, (b) eye movement control, (c) visual word recognition and (d) integration of information across eye fixations. Next the attempt is made to use our insight to obtain a better understanding of actual reading problems, such as those of elderly readers, low-vision patients, and dyslexics as well as those of the blind. Therapeutic options, including visual aids are given due attention.

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