

SHORTER NOTICES

Screening Mammography Technology

(Australian Institute of Health, Health Care Technology, Series No. 3, Canberra, 1990), pp. v + 22, \$2 postage and handling charge. ISBN 0-642-15379-5.

The report discusses possible alternative technologies to mammography for breast cancer screening, and concludes that at present film screen mammography remains the technique of choice. The design specifications required for satisfactory performance by screening and assessment mammography are discussed, and suggested specifications are listed. This is an update of the NHTAP, *Screening Mammography Services*, March 1988. Information is provided also on the costs and specifications of units currently on the market in Australia.

Tinted Lenses in the Treatment of the Reading Disabled by *A.R. Lea and D.M. Hailey*

(Australian Institute of Health, Canberra, 1990), pp. v + 33. \$2 postage and handling charge. ISBN 0-624-153426.

The report describes the approach developed by Mrs Irlen and consolidates and reviews the studies that have been performed to date. The costs of the technique are included within the report and an estimate of the prevalence of the condition scotopic sensitivity syndrome is given. Potential savings in remediation costs and costs to society are discussed. The problems associated with research or efficiency of tinted lenses are discussed and the report identifies a need for an extensive, well controlled long term study to further investigate the place of this method of treatment of the reading disabled.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging Services

(National Health Technology Advisory Panel, May 1990), \$2 postage and handling charge. ISBN 0-642-15429-5.

The report, following an earlier review in 1983, concluded that the expansion of MRI facilities in Australia should be cautious and concentrated where the comparative advantage of the technology is best established, as hard evidence of the cost-effectiveness of MRI in informing clinical decision making remains limited.

It makes two recommendations: that priority be given to providing access to MRI for hospitals with substantial neurosurgical responsibilities; and that the development and use of MRI be kept under review, particularly in newer areas of application.

The panel achieved consensus on the specific applications of MRI; also supporting the more general availability of contrast agents for MRI, along with the development of criteria for their use for costing purposes.

Cost data were included, but further detailed consideration was needed to estimate realistic costs of MRI examinations outside public hospitals or with newer types of equipment.