



When I first heard about a 'digital Volk' coming on the market I had all sorts of expectations of wi-fi viewing lenses or electronic ophthalmoscopes. When I got my hands on the new Pictor it was in fact not far off from being the latter. The Volk Pictor is a hand-held digital camera (Figure 1) not much bigger than a PanOptic and with a series of attachments that allow it to be used for retinal viewing, external and adnexal imaging, as an otoscope and as a means of imaging skin and surfaces.

Lightweight

At just 400g the Pictor is considerably lighter than any other hand-held retinal camera I have ever used. The basic unit can be fitted to a slit lamp but I was more interested in its portability. There is still a large number of housebound patients out there for whom adequate imaging would be a major breakthrough. The unit has a 2.4in TFT-LCD screen with antireflective coating for easy viewing from a comfortable distance and can be used for general imaging without any attachments. The tube-like attachment for retinal viewing had a rubberised

Small can be beautiful

A versatile hand-held camera has been launched by Volk.
Bill Harvey finds it light and easy to use

cup to maintain proximity to the patient and minimise external light (similar to that of the PanOptic) but I found it easier to remove this. The camera unit has a 5 megapixel CMOS image sensor capable of capturing stills (JPEG format) and video (MPEG-1) and on a full charge the unit can be used for an hour and a half. There is no fixation target (in the currently available unit) and though I found the image capable of picking up small detail, there is no way it achieves the resolution of a desktop camera (Figures 2 and 3). Focusing is automatic and can be refined with a simple movement of a small button. With a 2Gb internal memory there is no concern about the unit 'filling up' before the end of a typical clinic session.

External viewing requires a different attachment and allows perfectly acceptable images of anterior structures both with white light and also blue light for fluorescein shots (Figure 4).

Out of pure curiosity I had to try the otoscope attachment which allowed a perfectly acceptable view of the ear canal and drum of several colleagues in the office (Figure 5). The surface attachment spreads light diffusely over a lesion and the camera then takes an image similar to the macro setting on a commercial digital camera. Figure 6 shows a strawberry naevus.

The Pictor represents a breakthrough in hand-held imaging in that it is as light and easy to use as one would ever need. Its versatility is a big plus and I am sure that future incarnations may introduce fixation control and rack up the resolution for more detailed and less grainy retinal views. It would be perfect for a large multidisciplinary practice and anyone looking ahead at a 'poly clinic' set-up should seriously consider investing. ●

● For further information contact Keeler on 01753 857177.