

# MEDIA REVIEWS

Nancy Phelan Walsh, RN, MSN  
Associate Editor

## B O O K S

**Childhood Cancer: A Parent's Guide to Solid Tumor Cancers (2nd edition).** Honna Janes-Hodder, Nancy Keene. Sepastopol, CA: O'Reilly and Associates, Inc., 2002, 537 pages, \$29.95.

✓ Softcover



When parents learn that their child has cancer, they go through the initial shock of “why my child?” Then, questions about the disease and its treatment, cost, and impact on the family begin. These families, often overwhelmed, need an easy-to-read, accurate, and comprehensive reference to obtain this information so they can make informed decisions about their child's care. *Childhood Cancer: A Parent's Guide to Solid Tumor Cancers* is one of a group of patient-centered texts written to provide parents with information and practical advice about caring for an ill child. Other books in this series discuss childhood leukemia, brain and spinal cord tumors, and care of hospitalized children.

*Childhood Cancer*, divided into 27 chapters, covers topics ranging from diagnosis to death and bereavement. The authors arranged the book using a timeline approach. The opening chapters address issues pertinent to the family with a newly diagnosed child such as diagnosis, venous catheters, clinical trials, choosing a hospital, and different classes of solid tumors. Later chapters include discussions about therapies, siblings, returning to school, financial issues, end of treatment, relapse, and death and bereavement. Each chapter is fairly short but very thorough. Interspersed throughout the chapters are comments from more than 100 parents of children with cancer. This gives the book a more personal feel by talking to, not at, the parents who are reading it. Parents who are just starting this journey hopefully will derive some comfort from the fact that they are not alone

and that others have had the same concerns and questions. However, the comments are not one-sided; both positive and negative experiences are included. Although the authors caution readers that all families do not go through every experience described in the book, the personal comments may be overwhelming initially to parents with a newly diagnosed child.

The book's appendices are quite useful. Other books, videos, resource organizations, online sites, interpretation of blood results, and a dictionary are included. A removable treatment record for cancer survivors also is provided. With more children surviving cancer every day, long-term follow-up of their health issues has become vitally important. The treatment record places a history of the disease, treatment, and complications at the fingertips of the cancer survivor and future healthcare providers.

One weakness of the book is its lack of information for single parents who often have to deal with the added stress of coping alone. Single parents need practical advice about caring for a child with many needs using minimal support. They also need the support of other parents going through the same experiences. The addition of this topic will enhance this valuable resource.

When the authors, who describe themselves as having “been in the trenches,” wrote *Childhood Cancer: A Parent's Guide to Solid Tumor Cancers*, they were speaking to the many parents who have a child diagnosed with cancer. However, although they may not have realized it, they also have provided an invaluable text to healthcare providers. In the busy world of health care, thinking about what these families might be going through on a daily basis can be difficult. This book offers a glimpse into their world, which, in turn, will help healthcare providers better understand how to provide family-centered care to these very special patients and their families.

Kristin Hanak, RN, MS, CPNP, CPON®  
Nursing Faculty  
Front Range Community College  
Westminster, CO

**The Washington Manual of Oncology.** Ramaswamy Govindan, editor. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2002, 588 pages, \$42.95.

Softcover



*The Washington Manual of Medical Therapeutics*, now in its 30th edition, is considered by many to be “the bible” of internal medicine. Joining this premier series is *The Washington Manual of Oncology*, which has been designed as “a very practical manual that is useful to medical residents, fellows in training, nurse practitioners, and other practitioners of clinical oncology” (pp. xi).

The manual has a fairly straightforward layout. Chapters are dedicated to principles of cancer therapy, specific disease states, and supportive care. Most chapters are highly readable, although some sections may be too technical for average readers. For example, a chapter about patient management in radiation oncology contains a high level of technical data. Specific information about radiobiologic principles, the linear-quadratic equation, and detailed descriptions of collimators for intensity-modulated radiation therapy may be too technical for some oncology nurses, but they certainly are useful to radiation oncology specialists.

Disease-specific chapters focus on common malignancies, including presenting symptoms, diagnostic approach, staging, stage-directed treatment, current research, and epidemiology. Not-so-common diseases also are represented; for example, a comprehensive chapter is dedicated to thymoma and mesothelioma. This chapter was particularly useful to me because I had a patient diagnosed with this disease at the time. I was interested to learn that thymoma often is associated with myasthenia gravis (MG) and that a great deal of controversy regarding the use of biopsy and staging of the disease exists. I was able to use this information to inform my patient about possible future treatment and to arrange for neurology evaluation for suspected MG.

The manual concludes with several chapters about nursing issues, hospice care, blood transfusions, hematopoietic growth factors, and smoking cessation, which is particularly helpful. Another chapter that may be very useful for oncology nurse practitioners (ONPs) discusses oncologic imaging. The

Ease of Reference and Usability	Content Level	Book Size
Quick, on-the-spot resource	✓ Basic	Pocket size
Moderate time requirement	✓ ✓ Intermediate	Intermediate
In-depth study	✓ ✓ ✓ Advanced and complex, prerequisite reading required	Desk reference

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