

KNOWLEDGE CENTRAL

Barbara D. Powe, PhD, RN
Associate Editor

B O O K S

Handbook of Cancer-Related Fatigue. Roberto Patarca-Montero. New York: Haworth Medical Press, 2004, 483 pages, \$49.95 (softcover), \$89.95 (hardcover).

Three clock icons ✓✓ Three person icons Softcover



Cancer-related fatigue can be one of the most distressing symptoms for patients of all ages, with all stages of disease and varying treatment therapies. Fatigue can persist for months or years after therapy is completed, impacting the quality of life of cancer survivors. Author Patarca-Montero, an assistant professor of medicine, microbiology, and immunology in the School of Medicine at the University of Miami, states that “cancer-related fatigue is a complex problem, yet increasing interest and experience with it and other chronic fatigue disorders are rendering it more manageable” (p. xi). The purpose of the *Handbook of Cancer-Related Fatigue* is to help bring awareness and education to healthcare professionals as tools in the prevention and management of cancer-related fatigue.

This book contains extensive research results about all aspects of cancer-related fatigue, intermingled with information relating to chronic fatigue syndrome, with which the author has experience. Each chapter is very well organized, beginning with an introductory paragraph and an outline of the chapter contents. Specific key points are separated from the main text. Because this text is research oriented, every topic is very

well referenced. However, at times, the extensive references can make reading the text difficult. For example, one line of text may be followed by two pages of references, causing cumbersome reading.

The four main chapters include the definition and factors that influence the recognition and treatment of cancer-related fatigue; relevance of cancer-related fatigue to other cancer symptoms and the cancer diagnosis, predisposition, and treatment; possible causative, predisposing, and perpetuating factors of cancer-related fatigue; and treatment of cancer-related fatigue. The first three chapters can be very complex, but they provide readers with an extensive background into cancer-related fatigue. In addition, the need to assess and treat fatigue experienced by caregivers of patients with cancer is discussed. Although clinicians may find the first three chapters interesting, the content would be most helpful to researchers or those developing clinical practice guidelines.

The chapter on treatment of cancer-related fatigue is extensive, including a description of available published practice guidelines. The author acknowledges that gaps exist in the knowledge and research; therefore, current guidelines are based on a combination of research and expert clinical judgment. Topics in this chapter include graded exercise, energy management, sleep therapy, cognitive and behavioral therapy, nutritional therapy, pharmacologic therapy, complementary and alternative therapies, and immunotherapy. Especially interesting is the discussion that “exercise” is different from “activity” in fatigue management. No specific patient suggestions, patient handouts, or guidelines are supplied in this chapter.

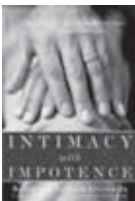
The last 234 pages of this 483-page book are dedicated to a reference list and an index. Because the index is extensive and the chapters are well organized, readers can easily

locate specific topics. Overall, the *Handbook of Cancer-Related Fatigue* contributes to the available literature about this topic by providing the results of recent research in one source.

Susan A. DiStasio, MS, ANP, APRN
Oncology Nurse Practitioner
Northwestern Connecticut Oncology-Hematology Associates
Torrington, CT

Intimacy With Impotence: The Couple’s Guide to Better Sex After Prostate Disease. Ralph and Barbara Alterowitz. Cambridge, MA: De Capo Lifelong Books, 2004, 220 pages, \$15.

One clock icon ✓ Two person icons Softcover



The nurse often is in the unique role of being a confidant to someone dealing with impotence after prostate cancer. *Intimacy With Impotence: The Couple’s Guide to Better Sex after Prostate Disease* would be an excellent recommendation for any couple facing a future with erectile dysfunction. The authors, a married couple, wrote the book because they understand that impotence is a major quality-of-life issue for many survivors of prostate and other male pelvic diseases.

This book, updated from a previous edition, contains 10 chapters and 4 appendices. Key points are included at the beginning of each chapter to allow readers to determine the content’s relevancy to their experience.

Intimacy With Impotence addresses both the psychological and physiologic components of impotency. The authors stress communication between partners and offer many suggestions for creating a loving environment and managing frustrations. Many topics, such as anatomy, incontinence, cleanliness, and alternatives to intercourse, are discussed frankly. Prior to describing sensitive, potentially offensive suggestions, the authors warn readers to skip the section if they might find the content uncomfortable.

*Oncology Nursing Society member

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

A major strength of this book is its vast amount of information on medications and devices. The authors address each drug, listing manufacturers, brand names, active chemicals, doses, administration, status, price, side effects, comments, and, if available, contact information. Devices and surgical interventions also are described in detail. Unapproved and off-label treatments are included, although they clearly are delineated from those approved. One appendix contains a table of medications, including therapies that are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as well as new medications in development. Another appendix lists the manufacturers of erectile dysfunction products and their contact information. The last appendix offers a comprehensive list of references and suggestions for further reading. Although many medications, devices, and surgical interventions are discussed, the text is free of commercial bias.

Overall, *Intimacy With Impotence* is an easy-to-read, candid book that could offer a great deal of understanding and help to couples experiencing erectile dysfunction. The authors exert finesse to avoid embarrassing readers when discussing sensitive issues. Any nurse could recommend this book and feel confident that readers would receive accurate, unbiased information.

Claudia Conroy, RN, MS, AOCN®
Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist
St. Alexius Medical Center
Hoffman Estates, IL

Managing the Side Effects of Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy. Marilyn J. Dodd*. San Francisco: University of California, San Francisco, Nursing Press, 2001, 324 pages, \$20.



Softcover



This thorough and well-organized guide was written for patients and families experiencing chemotherapy and radiation therapy. The author, a well-respected oncology nursing researcher, included new chemotherapy agents and monoclonal antibodies in this edition. The text is easy to understand and is cross-referenced, making it a quick resource. Despite the quantity of information available on the Internet, this book will be a valuable tool to patients and their families during cancer treatment. Its convenient size allows it to be carried easily to appointments and used as a supplement to educational tools given to patients by their cancer providers.

The first section of *Managing the Side Effects of Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy* is dedicated to chemotherapy side effects. The first chapter lists more than 70 drugs commonly used for cancer treatment, and an

easy-to-use table contains the drugs' possible side effects and associated symptoms. In the second chapter, the author discusses each sign and symptom of chemotherapy drug treatment in lay terms (e.g., darker skin color, breathing problems, feeling too full).

In the second part of the book, side effects of radiation therapy are listed. Side effects, duration, self-care measures, and when to contact a healthcare provider are discussed. In addition, radiation sites that may cause these symptoms are detailed; however, the inclusion of a separate list of symptoms associated with each radiation therapy site, as well as the most common side effects of radiation therapy for each particular site, would be beneficial for patients.

The final section of the text includes a patient self-care log and appointment worksheet. Although many patients will require more space to record their symptom experiences, these resources provide a template for patients to begin documenting their experiences that can be continued elsewhere if desired. Throughout the text, self-care measures are concise and research based. Complimentary symptom management interventions are discussed only when research exists to substantiate them. The chemotherapy drugs listed in the first section all are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration; investigational drugs are not included.

Nurses learning to administer chemotherapy and those updating patient education materials may find this book useful. This text is highly recommended for patients and families and would be a good resource for healthcare providers to distribute to all patients initiating cancer treatment. *Managing the Side Effects of Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy* is straightforward yet innovative in that it fills a void in the literature for lay audiences.

Eileen Glynn-Tucker, RN, MS, AOCN®
Independent Contractor
Green Oak, IL

100 Questions and Answers About Cancer Symptoms and Cancer Treatment Side Effects. Joanne Frankel Kelvin* and Leslie B. Tyson*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2005, 228 pages, \$16.95.



Softcover



The purpose of *100 Questions and Answers About Cancer Symptoms and Cancer Treatment Side Effects* is to provide information and support for patients with cancer through diagnosis, treatment, and post-treatment. It focuses on managing symptoms of cancer and the side effects from treatment, and patients with all types of cancer and their

significant others are its intended audience. The text was prepared in an easy-to-read question-and-answer format and was written at a basic reading level. Cancer terms are defined throughout the book and are presented collectively in a glossary. Sources for additional information, including National Cancer Institute brochures, American Cancer Society support programs, and Web sites for cancer organizations, are scattered throughout the text.

Personal perspectives from two patients with cancer appear throughout the book. The patients describe how they managed the cancer and the symptoms they experienced. Symptoms that require immediate attention by a physician are presented in bullets and highlights. In addition, an appendix lists cancer organizations' contact information.

This book is an asset to the currently available published resources for patients gathering information about cancer and managing side effects. After reading this text, people with cancer and their significant others will be able to better understand cancer and its treatment, as well as side-effect management.

Dawn Camp-Sorrell, MSN, FNP, AOCN®
Oncology Nurse Practitioner
Central Alabama Oncology
Alabaster, AL

Worth a Look

The Colon Cancer Survivors' Guide: Live Stronger, Longer. Curtis Pesmen. Morristown, NJ: Tatra Press LLC, 2005, 195 pages, \$22.95.

In this text, the author shares his cancer experience and recovery, as well as the experiences of other patients with cancer. *The Colon Cancer Survivors' Guide: Live Stronger, Longer* was written to provide a window into the world of cancer that becomes patients' "new normal." This "new normal" is viewed as the adjustment that people must make after surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation become a part of daily life.

This book is unique in its presentation because it is written as a blend of a diary, stage play, and textbook. Ten chapters are included, such as My Cancer Story, Putting Cancer in Its Place, Medical Matters, and How to Eat to Live Longer. As the author chronicles the events of this journey, he does so by using stage directions and dialogue of the participants. He sets the stage of each scene by relaying interior setting, exterior settings, sounds, and subsequent dialogue.

Although the format of the text is different than expected, it actually allows readers to "see" and "feel" what the writer is expressing. The book also provides very practical, fact-based information about diet, tips for caregivers, insurance, and questions to ask healthcare providers. A section of resources (e.g., books, Web sites, toll-free phone numbers) is included with a concise summary


of what each has to offer. This book would be worth a look for patients with colorectal cancer and their caregivers.

Humor After the Tumor: One Woman's Look at Her Year With Breast Cancer.
Patty Gelman. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003, 170 pages, \$16.

Humor After the Tumor: One Woman's Look at Her Year With Breast Cancer is the culmination of a yearlong process of recovery from breast cancer. The author's e-mails

tell the human side of her roller-coaster ride through diagnosis, surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation to treat her disease. She begins the book by discussing why she decided to share her journey through e-mail accounts. After her cancer diagnosis, the author received numerous calls, e-mails, and other correspondence from friends and family. She initially used e-mail as a way to respond but found the daily reports were actually a method of support for her and those who were concerned about her progress. Interestingly, the author expected to develop breast cancer

because of a positive family history. She recounts the plan that she made for screening and her perception of how her diagnosis and treatment would progress.

The book essentially is organized like an e-mail form of a diary, with dates and times for each entry. However, because of its structure, specific topics cannot be found easily. The book is compact and easy to read, and includes humorous illustrations. *Humor After the Tumor* may help breast cancer survivors by reinforcing that they are not alone. 

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at pubONF@ons.org.