



BOOK REVIEWS

100 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT COLORECTAL CANCER

D S Bub, S Rose and W Douglas Wong
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This book is directed at the cancer patient, carers, family and friends, providing information covering the entire spectrum of the cancer journey. It has been written by two Colorectal Surgeons and a Clinical Social Worker at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre. Throughout the book there are quoted comments made by patients which enables the reader to relate to the experience described.

The question and answer format of the book is very in depth in some areas yet only skims the surface in others. It is not possible for the authors to delve too deeply into the information due to the general purpose of the book, the individuality of the desired audience and the diversity of these cancers. It has been divided into 5 parts – The Basics, Risk and Prevention, Screening and Diagnosis, Treatment and Changes Cancer Brings.

My initial impression was that there was a lot of information given in the opening pages which could be a little daunting to the lay person. There are definitions set at the side of the pages which made it very busy. Cross referencing to other questions and answers throughout the book also made it disjointed in so much as obtaining relevant information.

Information given about the risk factors such as familial, age and lifestyle were very useful in the identification and prevention of colorectal cancer. The discussion of Familial Adenomatous Polyposis (FAP) and Hereditary Nonpolyposis

Colon Cancer (HNPCC) explained the screening very well. The table which provided the screening guidelines of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgery was comprehensive yet easy to follow.

The workup staging was very thorough and well explained. However some of the explanations for imaging used in the work up could be too complicated and could lose the reader's comprehension.

The dietary table was extremely beneficial and the recommendations gave sound information which can be developed for the individual. Methods to reduce diarrhoea from radiation therapy and chemotherapy were also useful.

The different surgical procedures were discussed effectively as would be expected with the authors being surgeons and highlighted expected bowel function post operatively.

In discussing the recommended treatments some information given in the chemotherapy section regarding current trends was outdated. It is very individual in the amount of side effects experienced and the level of coping in each occasion. This was well emphasised by the authors.

The final section covered Changes that Cancer brings. This provided excellent information for coping strategies for both the patient and the caregivers. It also highlighted the use of the team in the management of the cancer journey. This included the caregivers and their importance in this team.

This book does provide much valuable information for the patient with cancer and their significant others. The questions used are common questions cancer patients and their caregivers ask and the answers provided generally provide sufficient information. By using the index, answers may be obtained with ease.

Meredith Cummins
Riverina Cancer Care Centre, Wagga Wagga, NSW

