Cancer Survivorship Sourcebook
1st Edition – Health Reference Series
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The Cancer Survivorship Sourcebook is one of many general reference books printed as a resource for the general reader by Omnigraphics, though it is their first edition for cancer patients. The tag line on the back of the book advertises the series as, ‘helping the layperson understand, manage, and avoid serious illness’.

I found the book to have a very easy to follow index with a helpful section at the front explaining the information contained in each chapter. This would be handy for those of our client base who are not used to navigating their way through many modern textbooks. Included at the back of the book is a handy glossary of cancer care terms. Though the book discusses American statistics and resources, there is a section in the first chapter aimed at those readers not in the United States. The non-US reader is directed to the website for the International Cancer Information Service Group (ICISG) in order to make inquiries about local cancer treating facilities. The section then continues to explain to the reader how to get a second opinion in the US and what they need to obtain before visiting the US for treatment.

The book progresses in a logical manner from ‘If your Doctor says it’s cancer’, to treatment decisions and psychosocial management, to talking to friends and family about the diagnosis and treatment. The authors have included a very easy to follow explanation of numerous examinations and pathology, with normal values listed. A large proportion of terminology used in cancer treatment is mentioned and explained in a fairly easy to understand way, starting all the way from cell structure, through tumour markers to staging classifications.

Sexuality and reproductive concerns for cancer patients are also addressed. The discussion is broken into a disease specific format and then progresses on to treatment related causes. Overall sexuality is discussed in a very normal manner to help remove some of the stigma generally associated with sexuality and cancer treatment.

Issues of symptom control and survivorship are also covered and I was impressed with a chapter dedicated to palliative care, with the explanation that it “starts at the beginning of the cancer process and may change over time to reflect each persons priorities and needs. Palliative care is not giving up on treatment.”

Overall, I think the book is a good basic reference for those who have been affected by cancer in some way, whether it is themselves or their loved one.

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