

REVIEWS

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B O O K S

Living Well With Cancer: A Nurse Tells You Everything You Need to Know About Managing the Side Effects of Your Treatment. *Katen Moore*, Libby Schmais.* New York: Penguin Putnam, 2002, 320 pages, United States \$14.95, Canada \$21.99.

   Softcover



This thoughtful and readable guide for helping patients with cancer and their families to cope with the everyday and at-home symptoms of cancer and side effects of treatment is a gift to all of us concerned with compassionate, thorough, and effective care. Replete with wonderful guides and practical information, *Living Well With Cancer* examines common side effects and offers ways to live well, despite the difficulties and challenges of treatment.

This book is intended to be an aid, with conventional medical recommendations, in the management of side effects as well as complementary remedies. Aromatherapy, acupuncture, bach flower and herbal remedies, homeopathy, massage, meditation, nutrition, therapeutic touch, and yoga are highlighted as primary approaches in coping with the challenges of side effects. As a nurse who has a lifetime commitment to cancer care and as a cancer survivor, I consider the majority of these areas very helpful. Many references are about chemotherapy management and physiologic focus, but, for me, therapies such as the use of ginger for nausea, aromatherapy, and other approaches to symptom management were particularly valuable.

The authors are obviously well versed in the area, and they are a powerful team, combining an experienced and able nurse with a writer concerned about oncology and complementary therapy. This text definitely offers a consumer-oriented approach, and both the

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language and style are conducive to comprehension and ultimate follow-through. Highlighted boxes reveal particularly relevant points within the text, which help readers to focus on the main issues.

Living Well With Cancer is described as an A-Z reference guide to symptoms and solutions, and I agree that it is. Where else would you find wild yam cream indicated for specific side effects? Although I was initially put off by the presumption in the subtitle that the authors are telling readers “everything you need to know about managing the side effects of your treatment,” in reading, rereading, and working through the areas of reference, I could not identify anything that was omitted. However, several topics were handled somewhat superficially.

The glossary definitions are physical or physiologic in nature and could be enhanced by the inclusion of alternative and complementary language. A listing of resources offers addresses, referenced articles, and organizations and is a real strength of and contribution to this guidebook.

The intention of the authors is to provide information and present options to help readers make very difficult decisions (and not let themselves be rushed). This goal was well achieved. The one unfortunate conclusion is in the last sentence in which the authors indicate that “living well is the best revenge.” In the spirit of the text, perhaps the closing thought should have been “living well is the best challenge.”

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Blackwell Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Fast Facts for Medical Practice. *Mary Herring, Molly Roberts, editors.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Company, 2002, 164 pages, \$22.95.

   Softcover

As the number of patients seeking complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) con-





















tinues to grow in the United States, healthcare practitioners must have a working knowledge of the various forms available to provide safe and comprehensive care. *Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Fast Facts for Medical Practice* is a worthwhile resource for healthcare professionals. The chapter authors recognized that many healthcare professionals are medically trained in the Western philosophy; therefore, they provided basic information about common modalities to prepare clinicians for patients’ CAM-related questions.

The editors, a nursing professor and a family physician, have a varied and extensive background in CAM practice and have recruited an impressive group of multidisciplinary practitioners to contribute, including ONS member Terry Throckmorton, RN, PhD.

Although general medical practitioners are the text’s intended audience, oncology practitioners undoubtedly will find valuable and useful data to enhance daily practice. A great number of conceptual and theoretical details has been included in this short text. *Complementary and Alternative Medicine* has an easy-to-read writing style with a conversational question-and-answer format. Several tables and key points highlight the main topics, which enhances the readability for busy clinicians.

The text is divided into three sections: fundamental concepts of CAM, common modalities, and CAM’s impact on medical practice. One chapter addresses guidelines for advising patients about CAM, which is especially helpful because this topic frequently is overlooked in other texts. The chapter author, Marvin Herring, MD, offers clinicians advice about assessing patients for the use of alternative therapy. He suggests that questions about CAM should be asked in the same “open and accepting manner as asking about sexual practices or substance use.” More specifically, he provides questions and tips for practitioners, including, “Have you been using any vitamins or herbal medicines or interventions such as acupuncture, homeopathy, magnets, or meditation?” If the answer is “yes,” ask questions such as, “What do you hope to get out of it?” “Where did you learn about it?” “What do you know about it?” or “Has it been helpful?” Herring’s discussions about advising patients on safety and efficacy, choosing CAM consultants, and red flags of possible fraud also are clinically relevant.

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/03.ONF.1044-1045

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