

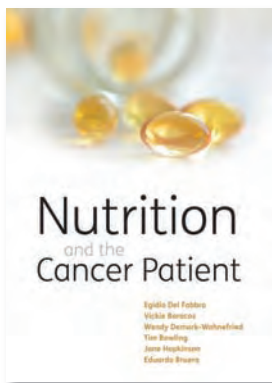
Book Reviews

Nutrition and the Cancer Patient

Edited by: E Del Fabbro, E Bruera, W Demark-Wahnefried, T Bowling, J B Hopkinson, and V E Baracos. Published by: Oxford University Press.
ISBN: 978-0-19-955019-7. Price: £75.00.

This book aims to develop the understanding of the spectrum healthcare professionals who are involved in the treatment of cancer patients. Written by an international MDT (multi disciplinary team) including dietitians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, gastroenterologists, pharmacists, research fellows, nurses and a chaplain. The book builds on a vast wealth of experience to formulate a guide highlighting some factors which we do not always recognise and perhaps are overlooked, especially in terms of ethics, religion and culture. Editors Egidio Del Fabbro and Vicky Baracos are American experts in palliative care and cachexia with Vicky Baracos having presented 'Underlying mechanisms of cancer cachexia anorexia: treatable and untreatable causes of malnutrition and wasting, circa 2010' at Aspen 2010 (American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition).

As a general cancer and nutrition reference book it covers relevant topics such as treatment of cachexia, nutritional counselling, complementary and alternative medicine and exercise, while also including some difficult topics such as 'nutrition in advanced malignancy' and 'ethics and medically assisted nutrition and hydration'. Do not be discouraged by the initial chapters based on complex aspects of cancer cachexia including biochemical pathways, adaptive response of signalling and metabolic changes associated with cancer which may not be practical in the clinical environment but are still important and useful to know. The later chapters which look at specific population subgroups, including survivors, paediatrics, co-morbidities, older people and end of life; contain useful case studies and summary tables for their general management.



Throughout the book the importance of an MDT is highlighted with one example being the chapter 'counselling by dietitians'. This explains the role of the dietitian in various areas of practice and the nutrition care process of screening, assessment, intervention and evaluation. As a guide for dietitians the chapters on 'treatment of nutrition impact symptoms' or 'nutritional management of patients receiving primary cancer therapy' comes from a medical viewpoint with the focus being on medication management and minimal mention of diet manipulation to aid symptom control. It must also be taken into account that there are differences as a result of cancer location and varying hospital procedures or protocol, especially as it frequently refers to American guidelines.

Despite the dietetic and geographical drawbacks, this book is a detailed and comprehensive reference book and so achieves all it aims to be. Throughout the 11 chapters the book is easy to follow and could be used as a good starting point for research. The case studies and diagrams help ensure easy digestion of the context and the in-depth post chapter referencing is up to date. This book could expand any healthcare professional's knowledge and consideration beyond that of the area they work in, building a better understanding of all nutritional aspects involved with caring for cancer patients irrespective of cancer location. ■

*Reviewed by Alice Lunt, Dietitian,
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The Snaggle Tooth Splat

Author: Karen Boswell.

An 18 page illustrated book for younger children published by brainstrust, has been written to support parents/carers with the mediation of the diagnosis of a brain tumour. Its key aim is to educate children about their diagnosis, and explains what brainstrust and clinicians are doing to help them. The book can also be used to explain to children what a newly diagnosed parent may be going through. It was written collaboratively with health care professionals from the neuro-oncology field and a writer, a designer and an illustrator (all of whom have donated their time to this project).

Opinions were sought from a variety of individuals from the neuro-oncology community. These included parents, carers, children, a neurosurgeon, GPs, paediatric neuroscience nurses, paediatric oncology nurses.

Generally reviews are good. The consensus was that the conversation and interactions between Mr Dot and the little boy are beautifully described and full of care and compassion. Children said that book is easy to understand. The quality of the production of the book is rated as excellent and one parent said the book 'goes



everywhere with his son. He takes it to every hospital visit and knows it off by heart.'

Comments from medical staff thought it would be more informative if there were more pictures of hospital wards, ct scanners and nurses, doctors in uniform and more focus on the role of the health service and less on the charity. However, this book was written to support parents at the point of diagnosis and to promote the support service which brainstrust offers. The black and white cover was not popular and some of the terminology was

considered confusing such as "grey matter"; reviewers felt that children may not know that this was a term used to describe the brain. It was also felt that the words tumour and cancer should be used. The book is distributed free to parents/carers of children with a brain tumour, and to paediatric oncology nurses. ■

*For more information about Snaggle Tooth Splat visit
<http://brainstrust.org.uk/news-detail.php?id=211&year=2011>
For more information about brainstrust and its support services
visit brainstrust.org.uk*