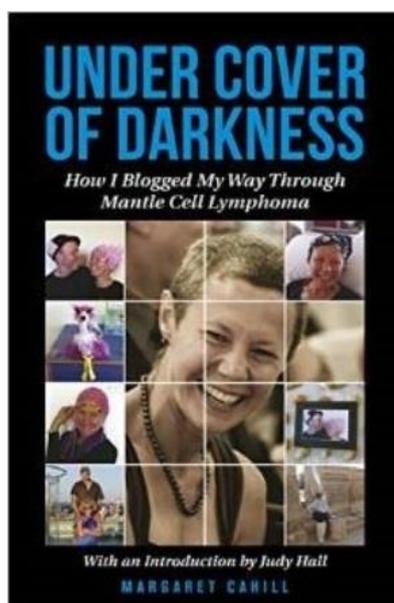


**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



Under cover of darkness. How I blogged my way through mantle cell lymphoma (2015)

Cahill M.

Winchester: O Books, 2015.

240pp.

ISBN 9781782799306.

Average star rating 4.0 (out of 5)

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Please also see the author's responses to the reviews at the end.



This will be especially helpful for someone living with mantle cell lymphoma, their family and friends to learn about the process and what to expect, make treatment decisions, and learn about alternative treatments to assist, or mitigate, conventional treatments and in some cases where to find them. It also shows how writing and communicating with others can help the process of living with a serious condition.

It is very easy to understand. We go through the journey with Margaret from day one and she explains terms as she goes along. There is a bibliography at the end to help with looking up books mentioned in the text. It is an appealing book. It is a light soft paperback, easy to hold and the cover photos help us connect with Margaret on a personal level (including her spunky pink flamingo). I'm not keen on how the smiling picture of Margaret is criss-crossed with lines, I feel they put a barrier between author and reader; perhaps they could be removed. The typeface is pleasant. The tone is personal, friendly, informational and for the most part upbeat. The reader feels like a friend listening to her, but also a support to her – she draws strength from knowing people are sharing her story. I like that Margaret feels as though she is speaking directly to you. She sometimes thinks she gives too much detail, but for those on the same journey, wanting to learn more about cancer and treatment, the detail is useful.

Margaret shares that reaching out to others can be very helpful in managing a cancer journey. Going public may seem exposing, but it opened healing through others in various ways, including conversing with people who also had this cancer, unlikely in a local community. I recommend it to others living with cancer who lean toward using words as a creative outlet. I enjoyed reading it despite the topic. I appreciate learning more about cancer and the details she shares would help any of us prepare for the choices we might have to make if we, one day, are diagnosed with any cancer. As an art therapist, I find there are many forms of creativity that can assist with living with cancer; for some, writing is the outlet and, in this case, leading on to a blog and sharing the writing in the wider world seemed especially helpful for Margaret, especially when restricted by her lowered immune system. I love this book.

Art therapist – I help to facilitate a support group for people living with cancer of all kinds (56-65) (July 2016)

I like everything about this book. It describes what it's like to experience mantle cell lymphoma first hand and is most useful for coping with the difficulties of treatment. It is particularly helpful for those interested in complementary therapies – patients aren't always made aware of these during treatment. It might sometimes be too painful to read during treatment – it depends on where you are – but it will be fantastic for a family member or friend to pick out salient points.

I like its helpfulness and optimism. It's upbeat and I was literally willing Margaret to get through treatment and wishing her well. She draws you into her life and I cared about her progress. It's also very easy to read, despite the difficult subject. It's written in a blog style, and very easy to understand, with all technical terms explained well. The happy and quirky photos on the cover convey the positive, upbeat theme.

You don't have to have mantle cell lymphoma to find it useful. I was diagnosed with Burkitt lymphoma in 2009 and wish it had been around then; I learned so much and it would have saved me from some of the more painful side effects of chemotherapy. There are so many recommendations, for example, vitamin A drops to help prevent mouth ulcers. Oh, how I wish I'd known about that! Margaret refers to several inspiring books that she drew comfort from and which I found helpful, too. The best part of this book is that it's infused with hope. It doesn't hide from the cancer nor gloss over the experience. The overall theme is that there are joys to be found in life, regardless of circumstance. And there is always hope. A fantastic book.

Survivor of Burkitt lymphoma (36-45) (April 2016)

Margaret describes the highs and lows of her experience and is realistic about the difficulties of treatment. It is easy to understand her treatment and feelings, but I was a bit lost with the astrological terms and would have liked more explanation. The layout and font make it easy to read. Overall it is very positive; having been through difficult treatments myself, it feels good to read positive thoughts.

Breast cancer survivor (56-65) (April 2016)

This is a compelling read and the author's overall positive attitude is inspirational. It is informative on many levels and most useful for what to expect from treatment and strategies to cope with the treatment and its side effects.

It is very easy to understand. The author explains everything well, especially as she asks questions of her medical professionals. It is taken from the blog that she set up at the time of her diagnosis. She wrote on this blog every time she underwent treatment (and even in between treatments).

An excellent read. One aspect I found very interesting is her mention of EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique). I had never heard of this before and have now looked it up and been reading about using this technique for dealing with stress and cravings. It sounds quite simple and almost logical to do!

I cared for my sister who had Hodgkin lymphoma (March 2016)

Diagnosed with mantle cell lymphoma in December 2012, Margaret Cahill embarked on months of chemotherapy followed by a stem cell transplant. During this time, she wrote an online blog to keep in touch with friends and well-wishers, covering her experiences in hospital and in between treatments. Many books outline a patient's experiences but Margaret's forthright, honest, pragmatic blog and the responses from her followers make this special, enabling the reader to follow her journey. The result is a much-longed-for remission – and this book.

Margaret is a deep thinker, and she explores her reactions to her diagnosis and treatment. She is a skilled communicator, and it is likely that the reader will get drawn into her thoughts, which are often funny, sometimes sad, but never pessimistic. It will be of great interest to anyone about to undergo cancer treatment – especially for those with a diagnosis of mantle cell lymphoma – for details of treatment, personal reactions, nutritional supplements, practical tips, support, and treatment approaches.

It is very easy to understand. The author is a publisher, and her book is beautifully crafted. The cover is good, showing the author smiling, positive and attractive during treatment. Margaret is likeable and interesting and has a warm and engaging writing style. She uses her humour and her wry observations to great effect and the reader gets to know her well. Margaret and her partner, Stephen, painstakingly researched and tracked down complementary and alternative approaches to mitigate some of the worst side effects of chemotherapy and to promote healing. These included distant healing, crystal therapy, reflexology, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, Ayurvedic treatment and mindfulness meditation. Most importantly, a strict daily regime of good nutrition – often through smoothies and nutritional supplements – was put into place. Readers will gain much advice about the benefits of this approach. For example, Margaret surprised doctors by avoiding oral thrush by taking a daily drop of vitamin A in the mouth. She is generous with advice, and this makes the book an invaluable source of information for people with cancer and their carers, rather than being just about herself. Accepting that while there is merit in complementary/alternative approaches and traditional medicines, sometimes, particularly when a person's life is on the line, she concedes that you need to be able to accept a blend of both.

Through Margaret's blog, the reader can get all the details of the practical rearrangements of her work and home life, as well as hospital treatment, including the hospital staff and the side effects of her chemotherapy (neutropaenia, anaemia, nausea, hair loss). She also describes in detail the stem cell harvesting experience. Margaret has had the valuable help and support of many people from the mind, body and spirit community worldwide, via her blog, and through her personal contacts. Many of the responses to blog are included in the book. Her partner, Stephen is devoted to her care, practically, emotionally and spiritually, travelling with her through the highs and lows of her treatment.

It did occur to me that the alternative/complementary treatments and nutritional supplements that she uses are costly – just at a time when she was unable to work as normal. She does not refer to this, and presumably, she and her partner prioritise these needs financially and otherwise but for some people, the cost would be prohibitive. However, even without this, her book gives the reader a great deal of information about what is involved in treatment. Margaret is not a passive recipient of treatment; she discusses it fully with her medical professionals.

It is important to keep in mind that the author had a relatively rare form of lymphoma and that the book focuses on this. Nevertheless, there is much valuable information about chemotherapy, stem cells transplants, and complementary and/or alternative approaches to treatment. Despite the complexity and seriousness of the condition, the book is an easy and friendly read. The author retains a good sense of humour throughout the difficulties of treatment. Her blog continues at

www.margaretcahill.wordpress.com.

Former health professional, friend of cancer patient (56-65) (December 2015)



This is a graphic description of side effects and is useful for understanding the severity and side-effects of treatment, the various treatments offered, and the support of NHS nurses. It is well observed, easy to read, well structured (as a blog) and well explained throughout. The cover design is lovely, and the typeface is easy to read.

I don't like the author's criticism of proven drug treatments; she overestimates the impact of unproven alternative treatments. Having been through two types of cancers, I have a strong belief and trust in the NHS and consultants. It brought back memories and made me wish I had blogged too. I recommend it but be aware of author's background and her overenthusiasm for alternatives that are unproven.

Living with sarcoma and former carer (56-65) (September 2016)

Overall, this book is written well. It is an honest (often humorous) and personal account of the author's struggle with an aggressive form of cancer. The author offers alternative methods of spiritual support (including mindfulness exercises) and tips for healing (including how the right foods can alleviate harsh symptoms of chemotherapy as well daily benefits). It is thought provoking and I would think the advice is valuable to a wide audience not specifically those living with mantle cell lymphoma.

I found the references to diet and good food useful knowledge for daily living and I would imagine useful for those caring for someone with cancer in alleviating discomfort alongside treatment and drugs. The book provides useful information on the reality of cancer treatments, including daily checkups, hospital appointments, blood checks, constant monitoring, in addition to chemotherapy.

It is written in order of diagnosis, treatment, to eventual recovery using blogs and narration throughout. Overall, it is straightforward to read and understand with no long-winded or confusing terminology. There are quite a few references to spiritual and astrological terminology that I occasionally Googled as this is not an area of my daily knowledge. It is an attractive looking book. It is a paperback, so it is easy to carry in a bag for the daily commute. The paper quality is in line with most books.

I like that fact that, although this is a serious book, the author has included light comedy from everyday inconveniences that everyone can relate to. I almost felt guilty laughing at various points. I did not like the occasional references to spiritual guidance and astrology; I am not familiar with these.

Relative and friend of cancer patient (brain tumour) (26-35) (August 2016)

This book is about one person's experience, with emphasis on the strategies and therapies used alongside conventional medical treatment and it would be useful for anyone with an interest in such matters. It is most useful for coping with the emotional and physical impact of treatment.

The book is a collation of blogs d by the author, interspersed with added reflections of her experience. The author explains medical terms and treatments as they arise in the text. It is a good quality book; the front cover features pictures of the author with an infectious smile, which draw you in. I like the honesty of the author in the way she shares her experience and the chatty, informal way she writes about those experiences. However, I do not like the use of blogs to tell the story; I think blogs are best read as they are intended, as real time updates given on a regular basis.

Overall, I like this book. It is a very honest account of how the author searched for ways of coping with the physical and emotional impact of a cancer diagnosis and treatment that were in keeping with her core values, whilst accepting the conventional treatment that often seemed at odds with these values. I felt the deliberation process she went through when deciding whether to continue with conventional medical treatment or reject it totally in favour of her other therapies; it highlighted how important it is for a patient, as much as is possible, to feel in control of what is happening.

I might recommend it; there are so many different types of lymphoma, that one person's treatment and experience may not relate to another's. Some people may be very dismissive of some of the things she tried, and indeed some of them do seem to me to be a bit 'out there', but even though I wouldn't embark on them myself I did find it interesting and informative to read about.

Breast cancer, melanoma and lymphoma survivor (36-45) (July 2016)

This very good read is an in-depth explanation of a patient's path through lymphoma. The author goes into every aspect of treatment from chemotherapy and relevant systems and the method of monitoring of her condition. She provides in-depth experience of treatment with side effects as she saw and responded to each.

It is logical in order, but the treatment must be put in context; treatment is specific to each type of lymphoma. The author goes into detail about all technical matters, sometimes too much, but with a sense of understanding. The cover design provides the reader with an early indication of the author's style of interpreting her treatment.

I like how the author reviews in detail how she saw different treatments, as we all do. I like the detail and how the author explains in her own words how the effects played out over time. The contents page is a good reference point for examining how treatment affects the patient. I enjoyed this book and could relate to the author as she told her story in as much detail as possible. Lymphoma has many treatments and side effects, too many to mention, but there is a beginning and successful end. I will probably recommend it but there are different types of lymphoma, so the reader should be aware of context.

Lymphoma patient (66-75) (July 2016)

This is a personal journey by a brave woman. It also discusses the doctor-patient relationship, managing the interaction with a hospital and its staff, as well as general aspects of the mind and body in relation to illness. It will be useful for any of us living with a lymphoma and the chemotherapy sometimes associated with the journey. The order is based on the contemporaneous blog/diary that Margaret wrote.

Margaret writes extremely well with great warmth, humour and sense of absurdity as well as honesty and openness, which are all very refreshing. There are many wise words! But references to astrology, meditation techniques and healing circles are a little obscure and the references to re-incarnation, burial rituals for the depressed, energy/muscle testing are a bit offbeat for me! Margaret also is openly zealous about nutrition in relation to cancer management – although this not necessarily a fault!

It is necessary to read the whole book because some discussions are not aired fully until later; if the reader is selective they may get a one-sided view. Mantle cell lymphoma is heterogeneous in presentation and prognosis and because of its rarity, a prognosis is almost impossible, and the figures given are not helpful. The chemotherapy regime described in detail is for a stem cell autograft, which most patients won't have; the management of this disease is individualised.

There are several messages of considerable value to us all, including 'it's OK to cry', the problem of submission/surrender and acceptance, and 'living in the moment', as well as coping with the debilitating aspects of the illness and the comparison with healthy individuals 'racing around'. It also deals with managing friends and relatives; indeed, Margaret deliberately made her illness very public to help her manage their anxieties. It is heart-warming to see how she values the support of hospital staff and her friends and family. Much of the book deals with food, nutrition and supplements that may or may not be helpful and that do not necessarily have a scientific basis. However, there can be no harm in working on one's nutrition. Indeed, it can mitigate the experience of loss of control; the activities involved in helping oneself are an important factor in managing the challenges of this or any other life-limiting disease.

Surgeon living with mantle cell lymphoma (66-75) (January 2016)



This is a detailed account of treatment for mantle cell lymphoma and the emotions that a patient may experience following diagnosis. I am living with lymphoma and didn't find much of the information useful as the regime described is very specific to mantle cell lymphoma, but I could draw on my experiences and empathise with some of the situations that the author found herself in. It may help someone who is diagnosed with mantle cell lymphoma, or their carer or family. It may enlighten them as to what is involved with this type of lymphoma and how an individual responds or copes with diagnosis and treatment. It is very much a personal story and does not represent all patients with mantle cell lymphoma.

The cover is appealing, with the author's lovely smiling face, looking confident and happy. Because the content is comprised of extracts from a blog, it is written in chronological order and describes the order of the diagnostic tests and the treatment. However, the most useful information about treatment is lost within a lot of other information about the author's beliefs in spiritualism and alternative therapies. If you just want the facts, it may be hard to find them easily. Treatment is described clearly and concisely but there is no glossary and I had more difficulty with the alternative concepts described. The author does try to explain each term and concept, but sometimes the description is too long, and I skipped certain explanations; however, I do not feel that I missed anything. I can't comment on the facts regarding treatment but there is a reference to a fox hunt passing through a garden that I found quite odd, especially since Margaret's diagnosis and treatment were after the fox hunting ban.

I thought I was going to enjoy this book, but I found it a difficult read, despite being an avid reader. The idea of recording blog entries in one book is good and it is also nice when the author adds additional information to put the blog entries into context and includes replies to her postings. It is lovely to hear about the wonderful support and care she received from the NHS. However, at times, I felt like I was fighting with it and had to force myself to read it. Although it is well written with humour, I struggled with the themes around the author's beliefs. I found this off-putting and frustrating in places. Treatment is described clearly and well, but there are too many references to gurus and alternative treatments. I also struggled with the concept of having so much support. That may sound odd, but the author came across as a bit needy and self-indulgent at times. She didn't need to share as much information; surely, some of it is private (even if someone asks you about it). It is wonderful that she had a huge support network, but not everyone has this luxury (or wants or needs it).

I am a scientist by profession and became angry and frustrated when the author questioned treatment that has sound research behind it. I know it is a toxic regime, but isn't that the point? There is too much emphasis on negative things, such as questioning whether to drink tap water, and adopting alternatives where it is almost impossible to establish the full range of chemicals in certain herbs, let alone find the evidence to support their efficacy. Just because it's an herb doesn't make it good or better. I appreciate there are things you can do to help yourself during treatment and recovery, but some of the things described go too far and are not practical for most patients. I would have preferred it if the author was more positive about receiving life-saving treatment, but she seemed to want to fight it and continually question it.

This book may be useful for those who want to understand the complex emotions and treatment that someone may undergo for mantle cell lymphoma. It may also help others in giving them an approach to cope with their own experience in a similar way, by writing a diary or a blog. It isn't a book for sound facts or advice (and it doesn't claim to be that). Before I recommend it, I will carefully consider the recipient. It may be too scary for others with the same diagnosis. It may be too "out there" for people who want straight facts. However, it may be useful for carers or family members of mantle cell lymphoma patients or for people with the same beliefs.

Living with non-Hodgkin lymphoma (46-55) (September 2016)

This book will appeal to those with a keen interest in alternative or complementary therapies as the author is very anxious to promote them. If inclined, it provides a blow-by-blow account of the chemo and SCT. The author is a committed believer in astrology and alternative medicine; she is entitled to believe in this, but I am not a believer. There are inaccuracies in the science, e.g. the disease might be caused by pesticide on unwashed grapes. Furthermore, I do not believe it is correct to suggest that the cancer will become that of the younger generation because they are eating poor quality food or that the disease is linked to or directly related to toxicity.

The author is a publisher and her book is therefore well designed including the cover, with several interesting photos. Except for the numerous italics used for the blogs on which the book is based, the printing is fine. The biographical account is easy to read but it is difficult to follow the numerous references to new-world therapies and more unusual alternative treatments. The frequent reference to alternative therapies and criticism of the unwillingness of the NHS to accept them is overdone, given that it is that very same science that the author primarily relies upon to kill the cancer and buy her hopefully many years of remission.

The book reaffirms what many patients may know already, namely that there will be some good and some very bad days. The author clearly suffered as her treatment progressed and that should not be taken away from her. Her book does provide a helpful prediction on what treatment might be like, albeit each patient will react differently. If the reader wants to know the gritty details of chemo and SCT, then they will certainly find it interesting. However, I don't like the attempts to promote alternative therapies, references to astrology such as cosmic ordering, and promotion of other books with a similar theme. There is no attempt to highlight the numerous sources of information about this illness or any discussion about recent research that has raised the possibility of new drugs. I suspect this is because the author has a general mistrust of the pharmaceutical industry even though that industry produces the toxic chemicals used during chemo. I was also disappointed that she did not address any of the many types of treatment recently developed for this rare cancer, e.g. the wait-and-see policy that I am on, or discuss its sub forms, e.g. indolent.

The author bravely discloses her feelings about treatment and its effects but at the same time, seeks to promote unusual and untested remedies. The references to astrology are distracting. That said, she does provide some tips that may certainly be worth considering, such as Aloe Vera juice. However, an opportunity to discuss what is a relatively new cancer is lost and as a fellow patient, I was disappointed that I

could find little new information. Furthermore, I cannot accept that a friend taking a photograph to the Egyptian pyramids and praying to the ancient god of the sun can in any way facilitate her cure and such suggestions undermine the author's credibility albeit she genuinely believes in such practices. She does highlight the high standards of NHS nurses and ancillary staff very well, as well as some of the doctors; I fully agree with this as they remain today's unsung heroes.

I might recommend this book to anyone interested in alternative remedies, herbal relief, and cosmic order, or alternatively to those who want to know what it feels like to undergo chemo and SCT. However, similar information is available on the blogs of Macmillan Cancer Support and the Lymphoma Association.

Living with mantle cell lymphoma (56-65) (July 2016)

This is a detailed account of a very specific form of cancer and its treatment. It gives a good idea of how your life changes during six months of treatment, for example, the experience of so many hospital appointments. It also demonstrates clearly that there is much you can do to help yourself, e.g. diet. However, the treatment is intensive and aggressive and could be scary for someone with a different cancer.

It is based on the author's blog and quite hard work. It is highbrow and intellectual with quotes from gurus, terms such as soul plans, soul evolution, and references to alternative therapies such as earth burial, jorobte leaves, energy testing, EFT, chant therapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, sound healing, crystal therapy. The author does go some way to explaining what these mean, but I didn't find it very easy.

I question the author's statement that much goodness is lost when vegetables are microwaved. She also states that the finger oxygen saturation tester doesn't work if you're wearing nail varnish. I was advised to wear nail polish as my nails would discolour and become fragile and the nurses still managed to measure my oxygen levels! I wasn't allowed to take in food when my father was having chemotherapy as an inpatient, so I am not sure that all hospitals allow this.

Some of the accounts of hospital incidents are humorous and much was familiar, but I wasn't keen on the overall feel; it is too detailed and boring, with many references to friends and contacts and all they did for her. She has an amazing support network around the world. A friend took her photo to Egyptian deities and temples. She was on people's healing lists. I felt inadequate about my diet – she didn't have to eat hospital food as people made her healthy options and found useful supplements. Not everyone has that luxury. She is a very articulate woman, able to communicate well with consultants and had lengthy appointments. I feel she is preaching to some extent and was in a very fortunate and privileged position compared to most patients.

I would recommend it to people with the same cancer; otherwise it is very scary as the treatment is so aggressive. Towards the end, the author writes of the terror of living with the prospect that her cancer might return. I don't think that way, I can't. I didn't find it uplifting at all; it is detailed, but a bit depressing.

Breast cancer patient (46-55) (April 2016)

Margaret Cahill is an astrologer and publisher in the field of “body, mind and spirit” and her book is published by O Books, a well-known publisher in the same field and of what some people may consider New Age approaches to health and healing. This is the blog she wrote in 2013, from her diagnosis, through treatment (including stem cell transplant), to remission, with some additional comments and material.

It is well written, and Margaret shares her experiences clearly and helpfully. Much of her description of her journey is interesting, realistic, and close to my experiences (I had a stem cell transplant in 2014) but I could not identify with her astrological and spiritual beliefs (crystals, angels, Egyptian and other gods) nor with some alternative treatments. She has of course the right to her beliefs and approaches to treatment and to chronicle how she believes they helped her through what is the worst chemo you can have. I admire her determination, honesty, and courage. Those particularly interested in alternative or complementary therapies may find it useful, but many may be put off by references to astrology and spiritual paths. This is a shame as she shares many profound aspects of her cancer journey that others could find helpful.

Living with non-Hodgkin lymphoma (56-65) (January 2016)

This focuses very much on the experience of living with lymphoma. It is very much one person’s experience and based on her beliefs. It will be most useful for someone living with lymphoma to know that they’re not alone. It does not offer specific advice or support, but it could be useful to learn how others experience lymphoma.

It follows the author’s treatment and is very easy to understand as it is quite conversational. There is no glossary, but she does explain things as she goes along. The typeface is easy to read, and the author distinguishes between her blog posts and her commentary well. I like the writing style— the blog posts and commentary are very interesting. I dislike the emphasis on spiritualism and alternative medicine. Although it doesn’t feel forced on the reader, it does overwhelm the narrative.

This book could be useful in terms of gaining an insight into living with lymphoma and the emotional effects of treatment. However, the emphasis on spiritualism and alternative forms of medicine and many of her comments about ‘conventional’ medicine could be counterproductive for some patients. The author is seemingly simultaneously positive and negative, particularly with regards to her opinion of the NHS and her ‘conventional’ treatment. However, the tone makes it easy to read and I feel that it does give a valuable insight into living with lymphoma.

Relative of someone who had childhood ALL and support worker in a cancer charity (Under 25) (September 2015)

The author responds to points made by our reviewers

Many thanks for all your comments. I just want to set the record straight on a few points raised.

I wish I had been allowed to wear nail varnish! I was categorically told not to, so didn't test the system, but it is worth knowing for other patients.

I went into a lot of detail about my experience and the treatment because I was receiving emails from people asking me to – I must admit I would have kept more of it private otherwise. Yes, it was scary, but the nurses made it all so much better, and to be honest I think we just wake up and deal with whatever we must face that day - we don't have the luxury of choice in that situation, do we?

It may read like I had a private organic meals-on-wheels service via my partner, but that wasn't the case. He was working full time throughout my treatment, although fortunately he could do some of that from home on the worst days, and he would only belt in to bring me food when he could. The rest of the time I had hospital food and that was the problem; it was so low in nutrition and completely unsuited to someone whose digestive tract had been trashed by the chemotherapy and stem cell transplant. That plus really bad nausea meant my calorific intake was dangerously low, which is probably why they let him bring in a bit of food.

It may also come across that I was in a privileged position regarding work, but as the owner of my own publishing company, taking months out to concentrate on getting well wasn't an option as the company would have folded. My laptop went everywhere with me and there were probably only about three days – the really bad ones after the transplant – when I wasn't working from my bed. That added a considerable amount of stress that I chose not to write about as at that point many of my customers didn't know what I was going through.

I envy those who are not terrified of a relapse. My mind works overtime in ways I can't always control, hence my forays into the more spiritual areas that don't necessarily interest people who don't need that level of support.

In response to the comment that my statements on the links between pesticide and lymphoma and the increase in diagnosis of MCL are inaccurate, the fact is that the diagnosis of MCL is rising by over 4% a year, faster than any other kind of cancer, and patients are getting younger. We know that glyphosate has made its way into the food chain, and even a cursory search on the internet will reveal that the link between pesticides and lymphoma is so well established as to be almost incontrovertible now. I would be happy to share my research with reviewers if they contact me.

When I was treated, I was only offered one, extremely aggressive form of treatment, because the lymphoma had a proliferation rate of 90%. There was absolutely no chance of waiting for a new drug or adopting a 'wait and see' approach. Consequently, I have no knowledge of the protocol for someone with an indolent cancer, and to be honest I didn't have time to even think about it. Why would I? At no point did I set out to write an authoritative guide on MCL; this was purely my experience and should thus be taken as such.

In response to the comment that I didn't research other, new drugs, I constantly questioned – and still do – my consultant on other, new, forms of treatment but there were none other suitable for the aggressiveness of this cancer. And yes, I do avoid drugs in general and a huge part of the book was about my hostility towards a science that is based on creating profit not health, but that saved my life. That itself is an interesting examination of the human condition. I would also point out that as I was unable to find adequate nutritional support online I was forced to do my own research. If the reviewer would like to send me the appropriate links to the information they quote I would happily share it on my blog.

Further information

Why does Macmillan Cancer Support review books?

We use reviews to help us compile a list of suggested cancer books, the [Macmillan Core Book List](#). Cancer information centres and public libraries can use this list to select appropriate and relevant books for people affected by cancer.

We add reviews to the [Directory of information materials for people affected by cancer](#) so that people affected by cancer can see what others in a similar situation think about a book. You can also see details of all the books reviewed in the [Book reviews listing](#), which also has links to all the reviews.

We recruit most of our reviewers through the [Volunteering Village](#) and the [Cancer Voices Network](#), people affected by cancer who have signed up to help Macmillan Cancer Support in a number of ways. Volunteers are a vital part of our book review process; since 2007, over 1,500 Macmillan volunteers have written more than 6,000 reviews of over 500 different books.

If you are a health professional who would like to review books for us, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

Information and support for people affected by cancer

If you are looking for support to help you live life with cancer, you may wish to contact one of [Macmillan's cancer information and support services](#). Or you can call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** (Mon-Fri 9am–8pm). We have an interpreting service in over 200 languages. Just state, in English, the language you wish to use. If you are deaf or hard of hearing you can use textphone no 0808 808 0121 or Text Relay.

You can also email us using the [website enquiry form](#). Alternatively, [visit our website](#).

Feedback

If you have any comments, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

Being told ‘you have cancer’ can affect so much more than your health – it can also affect your family, your job, even your ability to pay the bills. But you’re still you. We get that. And, after over 100 years of helping people through cancer, we get what’s most important: that you’re treated as a person, not just a patient.

It’s why we’ll take the time to understand you and all that matters to you, so we can help you get the support you need to take care of your health, protect your personal relationships and deal with money and work worries.

We’re here to help you find your best way through from the moment of diagnosis, so you’re able to live life as fully as you can. For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit macmillan.org.uk

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