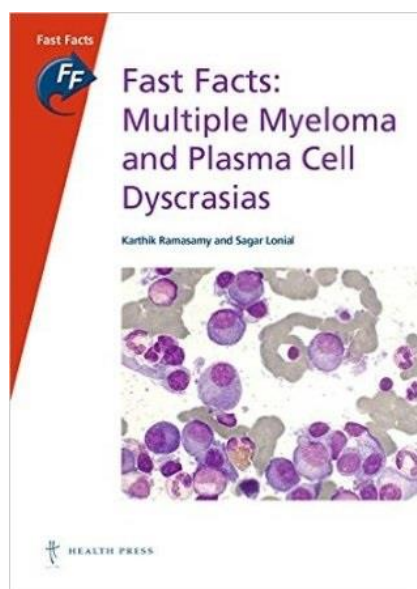


**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

# BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



**Fast facts: Multiple myeloma and plasma cell dyscrasias (2015)**

Ramasamy K, Lonial S.

Abingdon: Health Press, 2015.

152pp.

ISBN 9781908541956.

£15.00.

**Average star rating 5.0 (out of 5)**

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Not really knowing of the disease until my wife was diagnosed, I have learned quite a lot, more than my wife, who trusts the doctors and procedures and does not wish to delve too deeply as she becomes depressed. Therefore, I would say that it depends on the nature and ability of the person as to whom would find this book useful. My wife would find it daunting and worrying. I have noticed that she worries about many situations and subjects since she has had MM. She has an increasing concern about world situations even though she cannot contribute or affect them. This seems to happen as she soon tires. As a diversion she spends much time watching TV or reading. She is unable to take part in physical activities except for short strolls. Previously we have both been active outdoor people.

Almost seven years on from diagnosis, the contents of the book have increased my knowledge and understanding of the complexities of the disease, the ancillary problems and the treatments available. Future developments referred to in the book give one some optimism, so necessary to help the patient through the inevitable 'dark hours' that occur from time to time. The possible outcome is quite scary, but I have faith in the medical staff that they will do their utmost to ensure that my wife is able to bear the physical and mental pain and hopefully deal with the situation. (We do not agree with euthanasia ourselves but would be happy for health care professionals to ease the way should the situation become untenable).

The authors have approached the subject very logically. Obviously for a lay person like me, much of the information is beyond my scope and more appropriate for medical professionals. However, much is explained, and I have found Google very advantageous in aiding/expanding my understanding. The comprehensive index and 'Fast Facts' on the back cover are most helpful.

The book is targeted at medical professionals but there is much that the lay person can glean to provide a better understanding of the disease, its treatment and outcomes; this can help in appreciating the courses of action taken by health professionals who cannot be expected to explain the complexity and minutiae of the disease within the timeframe of the consulting room. Consultants and health care staff are very busy people and treatment improvements over the last six years are resulting in increased longevity of patients hence more work for the health professionals. The Government needs to act accordingly.

The chapters and subtitles guide one to specific situations that a patient or carer may become aware of and aid their understanding. The book is of a handy size, light to hold (important for patients who may have lost strength in their hands and arms), the typeface is clear, and the photographs and illustrations clearly presented.

Quite understandably much is beyond my comprehension but that spurred me to find out, so the 'dislike' is turned into a 'positive like' supplementing my understanding. Much easier than looking up the web where information may well be suspect.

I am glad that I have this book; it is a further aid to carers, should they wish, to find out more about the patient's disease, treatment and possible outcomes. My thanks to the writers for providing what can be an excellent compendium for interested carers and maybe patients. I may recommend it to others, but I would have to appreciate the 'nature and ability' of the intended recipient.

### **Caring for my wife with myeloma (Over 75) (October 2015)**

The cover defines the intended audience for this book as "primary care practitioners, junior doctors and allied health professionals". Some myeloma and plasma cell dyscrasias patients might want to refer to it for expert information relevant to their condition and then get further explanations from their medical professionals.

The book has a very factual style and is packed with information. It is divided into 12 chapters covering the different aspects of the disease and treatment. They appear to be in a logical order with no overlap. A medical professional would probably find it easier to understand; the authors assume a very high level of medical knowledge. Each chapter does have a summary page of the key facts covered. There is no glossary, but there is a comprehensive index and a list of specialist abbreviations.

I like the presentation style of the information and admire the consistency. The book is formatted throughout with an exceptionally high quality. There are many figures, photos and tables in each colour-coded chapter. The paper is of a high gloss quality and the durable cover is well designed. The typeface and font are easy to read. The tone of the book is very factual.

I have given the book a five-star rating as I think it would be an excellent book to have in a hospital research library. It will be very useful but only to the intended audience. It is not intended to be read by people affected by myeloma and plasma cell dyscrasias. Some of the information could be very disheartening. It would only be suitable for a patient wanting to research their condition and being prepared to look up many medical terms.

### **Kidney cancer survivor (66-75) (October 2015)**

This is a book for someone wanting to study to become a CNS in this area or even a doctor wishing to study this cancer type more closely. The facts are clear and numerous! Everything is very well explained but in pure technical terms.

It is extremely difficult to follow as it is very technical about the whole subject. Some graphs are misleading as they are not drawn to the same scales but are then roughly compared!

I gave the book a very high rating for its intended audience. For most cancer patients, it doesn't really provide any useful information that will not require an explanation from a health professional.

### **Living with prostate cancer (Over 75) (September 2015)**

This book is extremely factual and will be most useful for a health professional rather than a cancer patient or their carer. Anyone other than a medically trained person will find it too technical.

It is well written with colour-coded sections working through the journey. Excellent diagrammatic information when required.

A good reference guide for health professionals.

### **Bereaved (46-55) (January 2016)**

# 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](http://macmillan.org.uk)**

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