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This book would be very useful for anyone going into hospital as it gives facts and explains why admission and the differences between emergency and planned admission. So many different things are thrown at you at diagnosis that it is good to have admission to hospital explained – it is one less thing to think about.

It is a very logical book with a comprehensive contents list. It is easy to understand without being patronising. Medical terms and procedures are explained throughout, so you don't have to stop reading and look up terms somewhere else. I like the size of the book and the typeface. The cover design is great as it shows what is in the book. There are no illustrations or photographs, but I don't think they are necessary.

I really like this book. It is factual, easy to read and the sections and chapter titles are descriptive of their contents. The comments from patients in each chapter are very useful. They help to "humanise" the facts. I also like that the book is relevant to all of the UK. The sources of information at the end are a bonus.

Endometrial cancer survivor (August 2016)

Anyone dealing with cancer will benefit from reading this extremely useful book. It addresses all aspects of going into hospital and explains what certain scans and procedures are for and how they are carried out. This will be beneficial for those at the beginning of their cancer journey, to help them to understand the procedures and screening they will be undergoing.

The authors handle the topic in a logical order. There is no glossary, but I do not think this is necessary as the authors fully explain the terms throughout the book. It looks very appealing. The quality is brilliant, and the tone comes across as quite caring, whilst remaining factual.

This is a fantastic book, perfect for a patient, or a carer/family member of somebody who has been recently diagnosed and is unsure of the medical procedures they will be going through. I like that it covers all sorts of topics and acknowledges that there are potential fears linked to certain procedures. This allows the reader to feel comforted and at ease if learning that these fears are normal. It also gives

information such as what you can take into hospital when admitted, which I think is important as it isn't generally something that is discussed with a patient.

I would recommend (and have already recommended) this book to others affected by cancer. Many patients and their families have no idea about the types of testing, scanning, operations and treatments they may face and therefore have big fears about them. The book explains what to expect and what each test or scan is looking for and this could help people feel less confused.

Widow of bowel cancer patient (Under 25) (July 2016)

People living with cancer spend a lot of time going to and from hospital. This can be for x-rays, procedures, operations, possibly physio, clinic appointments to have blood work and consultant appointments as well as treatment. This book gives the patient details of all the departments, how they work and what to expect. It will also be useful for carers and family. It is good for helping people navigate hospital departments and equips them with facts about their care, making them more confident about asking the right questions.

It flows well, the language is easy to understand, and medical terminology is clearly explained. At the end, there are useful sources of information for the patient. I like the amount of information, everything is covered. Although packed full of information, it is a handy size so could be brought to hospital appointments for reference.

It feels good to read a book that has been written especially for the patient. Health care workers are so used to a hospital environment, but it can be a daunting place for the public. This is an ideal book for anyone attending hospital. It's a good go-to book for information to help you get the best from your hospital visit.

Breast cancer survivor (36-45) (May 2016)

This is a guide for patients, and the carers and families of anyone going into hospital, but its helpful information goes beyond hospital stays. Whether it's an outpatient appointment, planned or emergency admission, it answers comprehensively and simply all the questions anyone might have, questions we've all faced in our lives. Just hearing relatives talk about being sent for a test can cause anxiety but this book explains fully all the tests and terms to ease our doubts about the unknown when a loved one is unwell. It is also helpful in taking a sensitive approach to discussing the need for patients and carers to make decisions about their care and the importance of understanding that they need to take an active responsibility in their own care.

It is a handy size that can fit in a handbag and the chapters are short and to the point. The order makes sense, from an introduction on why the book was written to a helpful appendix full of useful links. Sandwiched in between are several clearly headed chapters covering various aspects of hospital care. It is not specifically aimed at people living with cancer but there are dedicated chapters on chemotherapy and radiotherapy and most of the other chapters are relevant and extremely helpful in breaking down all aspects of a hospital experience. The layout is ideal for dipping in

and out. There is a clear contents page and, after reading the introduction, it will be most helpful to read the chapters that are most relevant at each point through treatment and use the book as a go-to guide when questions arise; reading it cover to cover in one go may be overwhelming.

It is written in a kind and reassuring tone and in a way that is extremely easy to understand for the audience – patients, carers, and families. It explains technical terms throughout, but it is never patronising and has a kind and understanding approach to how difficult the experience of going into hospital can be. The authors are medical professionals, including a psychologist, so all aspects of care are covered in a practical way with a strong understanding of the emotional stresses that hospitals can cause for everyone; this is always covered with the utmost sensitivity.

I like how accessible this book makes all aspects of the hospital environment and how it cleverly takes the complex care involved for a variety of illnesses and keeps it simple but detailed in its explanations. I love how on the same page the authors explain how a complex machine like an MRI works and yet, just as importantly, explain that emergency departments and wards will be able to provide supplies such as a toothbrush and soap if needed – every worry is covered! It is hard to find anything I dislike! A detailed index would be helpful to some for a faster way to find what they are looking for. My only other concern is that as time passes, this information may change; the reader needs to understand that the statistics and even how the hospital functions may have changed.

Overall, I am really impressed with this book; it's an essential guide for every household. It states the facts and takes an active stance in encouraging people to reach out for the emotional support they need on their journeys through hospital. We all experience hospital at some time in our lives and this book is invaluable in terms of keeping it simple and to the point. It could really enhance someone's experiences and care whilst undergoing hospital treatment.

Bereaved as a child (brain cancer and uveal melanoma) (26-35) (May 2016)

This lets people know what to expect and what may happen to them in hospital, explaining each stage in detail from admission, through treatment to discharge. It will also be useful for carers, who, if warned beforehand, can reassure the patient.

It is value for money, well designed and the text is not too small. It is well laid out, although the subject headings could be brighter. The language is not complicated, and the subjects are not too longwinded to read.

It is a marvellous book, and not just for cancer patients, it is for anyone. It will help people that have a fear of hospitals and it explains everything you need to know and how everything works from admission to discharge. Excellent reading.

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

This is a simple concept, brilliantly executed by the authors. They encourage the reader to think of hospital as a foreign land and they have written the perfect travel guide to enable the reader to negotiate the many possible bumps and twists and turns in the road ahead. Hospital processes can be difficult to understand at the best of times and this book will help to smooth the path for patients, friends, and family.

It is a very appealing book in every way; from the simple, modern cover, through the paper quality, to the clean and elegant typeface. It is well thought out, written in uncomplicated language, and arranged in such a way that it is possible to choose the most relevant sections as needed. Much is simply common sense, but that can fly out of the window when you are ill and vulnerable or facing a medical emergency. This informative book helps to focus the mind brilliantly. Two sections that I found particularly interesting are: 'Reasons for blood transfusions and how is it given'; and 'What happens when I am anaesthetised?' Questions I have often wondered about!

The writers made me feel that they know exactly what it feels like to be a patient but without being patronising. The firsthand accounts from ex-patients are interesting and used well to illustrate various points. When hospital treatment is needed, time constraints often leave medical staff too busy for comprehensive explanations about what the patient, and their families and friends, may encounter. This is a reassuring guide as to what to expect. With this book... knowledge is power!

Breast cancer patient (66-75) (April 2016)

Most of us will visit a hospital at some point, as an inpatient or outpatient, a visitor, or carer of a relative or friend. This is an essential 'travel' guide. It is not about a specific cancer, although the chapter on chemotherapy and radiotherapy is a straightforward introduction to these treatments and their possible side effects, including questions to ask. Many cancer patients also have surgery, so the chapter on having an operation is also relevant. Overall, it is all useful for cancer patients or those caring for them, as it is a complete guide to hospitals, how healthcare works, being a patient, staff, and investigations and treatment. There are chapters on how to look after yourself in hospital (self-care, infection prevention, pain relief) and useful advice for visitors.

There is lots of technical information, which is explained well, for example: a table listing common blood tests and why they are performed; medical devices – what they are and what they do; and different types of pain relief. It is broken down into different sections, some are relevant to everyone, others are specific to conditions or age groups. It flows well if read from beginning to end but is just as good as a reference book. There are lists of helpful questions to ask your doctor for example, about tests, medications, or an operation you may need to have. There is also an extensive list of organisations that offer support and advice to patients, families, and carers with particular illnesses, or who provide more general information on healthcare.

It is very well written, easy to follow and understand. It is highly informative and user-friendly. The tone is supportive and empathetic throughout. It is written in a friendly, understanding and kind tone – reflecting a very good bedside manner. I like the patient stories, which are in a different font with quotation marks throughout the book. They help to illustrate, with a touch of humanity, some of the information.

The book is the ideal size and weight. The paper is very good quality and thickness. The cover feels nice to the touch and is simple and effective in bright colours and depicts the often-confusing layout inside hospitals, which can be stressful and difficult for people to navigate their way round. The typeface is plain and easy to read and a good size. The chapters are made up of lots of different paragraphs, each with a heading in bold type. There are also tables and boxes throughout.

I love how this book is written in the style of a travel guide to a foreign land. You can read it from cover to cover or just select relevant chapters or sections. It is very easy to select these from the contents or to flick through to find what you are looking for. It is an invaluable guide to going to hospital. It does not provide information on managing or living with cancer, but it is a very useful and essential guide for anyone who has to go to hospital for whatever reason. It will help patients and carers to be much better informed and to work in partnership with their health-care team. For anyone who is feeling worried and anxious about a visit to hospital, this book is a must read to help answer their questions and set their mind at ease. A superb book!

Friend of someone with bowel cancer (36-45) (March 2016)

This book is aimed at anyone who finds themselves in hospital or who has a planned hospital stay. There is only one chapter dedicated to treating cancer, but most of the content could be relevant to cancer patients. It flows well and has a good contents page for easy navigation. For such a complex topic, it is written well in an accessible style, with medical terms explained where necessary. The cover and layout are nice.

Everyone likely to have to endure a hospital stay should read it. It is informative and comprehensive and will allay fears. There are good patient testimonies and clear explanations of medical terms, including ICU devices, types of injections and pain relief. The downside is that it is quite long and not all the information is relevant to all patients, but it is an easy read with a good contents section. However, I am not sure who would use it before they are admitted. Health professionals could suggest it prior to a planned hospital stay but many people end up in the system unexpectedly and may not have the time or inclination to read such a long book.

Former carer (56-65) (February 2016)

I enjoyed this book very much. It is interesting, with good information and explanations of the different tests. It will be helpful for anyone going into hospital. It is most useful for the information on having an operation, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy, looking inside the body and end-of-life care. The size is about right, and the layout is good but the cover is not appealing. The order is good, but the chapter on leaving hospital would be better before that on specific circumstances. It is mostly easy to understand but a glossary would be helpful; medical information is confusing and can be hard to understand. I would like more information on chemotherapy and radiotherapy. I did not like the chapter on understanding risk and making choices; the section on making choices is helpful, but not the percentages and proportions.

Caring for my husband with oesophageal cancer (56-65) (January 2016)



This would be helpful for someone at the start of their journey and as they visit hospital for various tests, operations, and treatment. It would also be helpful for the family and friends of the patient to enable them to better understand and support.

The authors handle the topics in a logical order and the book flows well. It is easy to understand; the authors explain technical words and the language is appropriate for the intended audience. It is appealing with an attractive cover. I like that it is easy to understand and well thought out; the sections are small and not long winded, so it can be used as a quick reference for the parts that interest you, e.g. blood tests.

Breast cancer survivor (36-45) (December 2016)

This book will be useful to anyone who needs to visit a hospital, as an outpatient, inpatient, carer, friend or relative, health or social care professional. It puts what is a strange and unknown environment into context. What health professionals working in a hospital can often take for granted is explained in clear simple language.

Because cancer is diagnosed and treated in the hospital setting, this book is useful for anyone who is referred for tests, being treated, or visiting someone in hospital. It goes through what people can expect when coming to hospital, from having a blood test to preparing for an operation. It covers all aspects of the hospital environment. The content is arranged in sections, in chapters with subheadings. Bold text is used to differentiate between headings and the body of text. There is one diagram in chapter 7 and useful information is put into boxes and tables. The layout is good but sometimes the pages seem crowded. The book is printed in black and white and the colours on the cover could have been used to highlight boxes and tables.

The beauty of this book is that you can find the answers to questions you wouldn't normally know to ask. You can look at the contents page and find what you would most like answers to. It demystifies the jargon and explains the complex using easy to understand language. The author explains in the concluding paragraph that going into hospital is very much like visiting a foreign land. It covers the whole journey from admission, through staying well in hospital, to discharge. No area has been overlooked. I recommend it to anyone; it's the 'rough guide' to hospitals! I know I'll keep referring to it so I can help anyone visiting to make sense of the hospital setting.

Macmillan Professional (26-35) (August 2016)

This is a very informative book on the insights and definitions of an average day in hospital. If someone is newly diagnosed with cancer or has never been admitted to hospital, it helps explain procedures, and who the staff are in different disciplines and what they do.

It flows very well. In addition, the authors provide information at the beginning about how the reader can use it best. This is particularly good for the reader. It is very easy to understand, and the language is appropriate for the intended readers.

This is an appealing book due to its bright colours and in-depth information on what to expect in hospital. What I like about it, is that it can potentially reduce anxiety for those affected, i.e. the patient and family, by providing information in a simple manner about hospital processes, who the staff are and what they do, and any procedures they may endure. It aids the mind so that they are not going into hospital not knowing what to expect.

Carer and daughter of cancer patient (26-35) (July 2016)

This is written by three healthcare professionals (all with an interest in patient safety and service quality), but aimed at patients and their carers, family, and friends. It isn't cancer specific, but rather about the hospital experience (inpatient or outpatient). However, it does have a chapter on treating cancer with chemotherapy and radiotherapy and in general the whole treatment section is useful, with chapters on taking medication (including tips on pain control), surgery and blood transfusions. The book is therefore useful for before, during and immediately after a hospital visit.

The authors are experienced healthcare professionals who have worked in hospital a great deal. The book flows in a logical order, from preparing to go to hospital, through what happens while you're there and what you can do to look after yourself in hospital, to leaving hospital. It also details some 'Specific circumstances', including children in hospital, older people in hospital, and end-of-life care. Everyone's experience of hospitals differs, but the authors have done a good job of generalising in a book that might be read by people with a very wide range of conditions.

It is a practical-looking book, written in a clear and friendly way. In general, it is easy to understand, but in places you can tell that the authors are medical professionals. There is no glossary, which might have been useful to explain some less common terms. It is quite long and text-heavy and, as the authors themselves say, probably something to use as a reference guide, rather than read cover to cover. It does contain a good level of detail for people who want in-depth information. The authors compare going to hospital with visiting a foreign land and suggest this book should be used in the same way you would a holiday guide! In general, it is a good-quality book, with a clear, easy-to-read typeface, and makes use of tables and boxes, and some patient quotes. Particularly useful are the boxes with questions you might want to ask during your time in hospital to make sure you're happy you know what is going on. One downside is the lack of photos or illustrations, which might have been nice in certain sections (e.g. when describing equipment, such as a portacath, or a procedure like a blood transfusion or radiotherapy).

I like the friendly and supportive language and the fact that the authors have experience of working in hospitals. I also like that it encourages people to ask questions of hospital staff; sometimes people can feel a bit reluctant to do this even if they aren't sure of something.

I didn't dislike anything, but people should be aware that is quite long and text-heavy, as mentioned above, so might not be to everyone's taste. It's also more suitable for those who have prior knowledge that they're going to be in hospital! However, it might also be a useful reference guide for someone once they are in hospital (or for their family and friends), particularly if they need to stay for an extended period or need to return. As it isn't cancer specific, it doesn't include much detail on this (apart from one chapter), so it isn't suitable for people wanting to learn about treatments and side effects specific to their cancer. Aspects such as hair-loss and sickness are mentioned but would be given more emphasis in a book aimed only at cancer patients and their families. It would also be helpful to have a glossary and an index, to make it easier to look up subjects of interest.

This is a factual book, rather than one aiming to provide emotional support. However, as the authors state, "Knowledge conquers fear", and the level of detail should certainly help take away some of the unknowns about visiting hospital. Overall, it is a good book for anyone who needs to visit hospital regularly for treatment, or their family and friends. Some sections are specifically geared to cancer patients and a lot of general information is useful and interesting regardless of your illness.

I may recommend it. It contains some very useful information and points out some things that I would certainly have found useful before going into hospital (even some things that seem less important, like what to take with you, which can make a difference to how comfortable you are while you're there). The book generally discusses things that I've picked up as I've gone along with being in hospital, but it could help people avoid having to do that and make them feel more in control of their hospital experience from the start. However, as it's not cancer specific, people may prefer to read something directly related to their own condition.

Leukaemia survivor (26-35) (June 2016)

This is useful for those wanting general information (e.g. understanding outpatient appointment systems, the roles of health professionals), help with making informed decisions and understanding jargon/results. Bloods are a significant area for a cancer patient; this section is simple yet helpful for someone to grasp an understanding about common blood groups and the associated risks. Chapters 13-15 are particularly useful as they provide detailed information about scans, tests, and treatments. Chapter 17 (Treating cancer with chemotherapy and radiotherapy), is brief – understandably so if the book is aimed at a more general audience – but detailed enough to give a simple and quick insight into what to expect/side effects.

The book flows logically and is well thought out and easy to navigate. It is very easy to interpret and understand and helps to simplify the potential eventualities that one might consider to be complex and confusing. A glossary isn't necessary as the information is broken down in layman's terms throughout. The cover is colourful and eye catching, and I like the cleverly designed departmental theme. The book is quite lengthy and unexciting when flicking through; although that is to be expected with most guide books, more diagrams/tables or colour may give it more appeal.

It is very informative and an excellent reference guide for a variety of circumstances. It offers useful tips and guidance for a whole patient journey from appointment/admission preparation to post discharge. It is particularly useful to help a first-time patient tackle hospital jargon, understand the roles of various professionals and more importantly, to assist and help them make informed decisions. It is also a useful reference guide for students or those working in, or visiting, a hospital environment. However, the approach is essentially that of a textbook and I would prefer a more personalised approach, or a patient's perspective alongside that of the professionals.

Breast cancer patient (Under 25) (June 2016)

This book explains how hospitals work in general, no matter why you might be there, and explains how to cope with the unfamiliar environment. It doesn't specifically concentrate on cancer but does explain chemotherapy and radiotherapy simply so would therefore be most relevant when preparing to go into hospital. The style and format allow you to look up subjects without reading the whole book. The introduction in fact suggests that you read the general chapters that give an overview of the different staff, staying safe, leaving hospital, and how hospitals work, before selecting the chapters relevant to you.

The whole point of this book is to explain the technical jargon that you might hear in hospital. The authors, a consultant, a surgeon, a pharmacist, and a psychologist, attempt to help you translate hospital speak into straightforward English. The typeface and layout make it easy to understand and the contents page is clearly set out, making it easy to find what you are looking for. Although there are no photos and only a few illustrations, none are necessary. The shaded boxes of information, questions to ask, and little summaries of the chapters add to the book's appeal. It doesn't really need a logical order – although they do discuss becoming a patient before what to do when you go home. It is more of a reference book, so you select the chapters relevant to your hospital visit and may find yourself jumping backwards and forwards. For example, you might want to read chapter 18 on how to look after yourself before reading chapter 15 on having an operation.

I like how the information is provided and the fact that you can find what you want without having to read the whole book. The chapters are short but there are links to additional reading should you need more than a general overview. The only thing I dislike is the statement made at the start that hospital staff "will not generally have time to explain how the hospital system works or to provide the background information about health and healthcare that will help you make the best decisions for you or your family..." This may make some people nervous and lead them to believe that their questions will not be answered and staff won't have the time to talk to them.

The authors are experienced medical professionals and whilst they do not go into detail on any subject, they do believe that if people are better informed and can understand what choices they have, they will be better equipped to help themselves and their families. It is easy to read and offers a reference point for those being admitted to hospital or visiting someone in hospital. It gives you handy do's and don'ts, from what to take with you to suggested questions to ask and things that you shouldn't do on the ward.

I give it four stars because it does what the title says, but not for its information on cancer. It is not particularly useful for managing or living with cancer, but it is very informative with regards to one aspect of treatment, namely going to hospital. I might recommend it to people if their treatment involves going into hospital and they haven't been before. But not if they want specific information on cancer and its treatments, as it only touches on chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

In remission from ovarian cancer (56-65) (May 2016)

This will be useful to anyone who wants to know more about going into hospital and to understand what may happen when they are there. It looks good, is a nice size and is written in plain English. Overall, it is a good book for someone like me, who wants to know everything that's going to happen to them while they are in hospital. I will probably recommend it, but it will depend on how much an individual wants to know. I would like an index, so that it can be used like a dictionary.

Living with cancer of the base of the tongue and parotid gland (56-65) (May 2016)

This book is not directed specifically at cancer patients but would be useful for anyone who might have to go into hospital, visit a patient, or care for someone leaving hospital. It is especially useful for patients and relatives or carers to read before admission. I wish I'd been able to read it ten years ago when my mum went into hospital for a routine operation and ended up in intensive care.

The process of being a patient or visitor is described logically, starting with investigations, through treatments, to discharge. It describes what it means to be an outpatient, diagnostic tests that might be needed, procedures involved if surgery is required and what to expect if you have chemotherapy or radiotherapy. I recommend it to anyone who expects to have any of these tests or treatments for the simple reason that it will help them to think of what questions they might want to ask first.

The cover is colourful but clean and clear and the paper is smooth and pleasant to hold. I like the typeface and the clarity of the writing. The language is very easy to understand, and difficult terms are explained immediately in brackets. The style is confident but not overbearing or patronising. I felt that the authors genuinely wanted to help me to understand what happens in hospital.

It covers everything that I have experienced in hospital as a patient and a close relative of a patient. Everything is in general terms (not every type of test or treatment can be explained), but the information is enough to help you formulate questions. It will be less useful for a child or young person or their parents because the section on children refers to earlier sections, making it harder to navigate. The major omission is an index! The covers are decorated with terms that you hope will be explained inside, but there is no index to help you find them. 'Dialysis' is mentioned somewhere, but I can't remember where and I would have problems finding it again.

This book is useful for patients and carers in general, affected by cancer or not. I belong to a cancer support group and sometimes new group members come to us straight after diagnosis but before treatment starts. Some of them might find this useful. I would have given it five stars but for the lack of an index.

Breast cancer survivor (46-55) (March 2016)

This covers the whole process from admission to discharge and goes beyond that to care at home or elsewhere when care and medical facilities are available. It is most useful for anyone with some experience of cancer, as a patient, carer, family member or friend. It may also interest health professionals as it gives some indication of the patient's perspective, often overlooked.

The cover looks business like and gives an early indication of the content. The pages and print are very clear and uncluttered, and the content is divided into chapters with relevant topics. The tone is friendly and personal, which makes it an easy read. It is clear and concise, with no clutter or padding – it says it as it is in plain English and is an easy read. Explanations are given where necessary and Latin words and phrases are explained, as are acronyms. At one point, the authors state: "micro organisms sometimes known as germs or bugs". I think it should be the other way round, "Germs and bugs, sometimes known as micro organisms".

There really is not anything to dislike. There may be occasions where a patient of nervous or private disposition would rather not know too much in advance and may worry more than if they had not read the book! For those who do have the opportunity to read it prior to admission, it would be a useful aide memoir.

Before recommending the book to other people affected by cancer I would give much thought to their personality, character and how they have already been affected by cancer. There are those I am sure would benefit from reading the book but there are those who I feel would just worry and be all the more upset by doing so. I found Chapter 9 re the ICU useful after my stay in such a unit. I would not necessarily have wanted to be made aware of some aspects of being a patient in ICU – it could have added to my feelings of anxiety and stress.

As a cancer survivor of some six years who has had several spells in hospital as an in-patient and out-patient, I am pleased to have had the opportunity to read this book. I may well have benefitted had I been able to read it prior to my first admission although I tended to accept things as they were and valued the fact that all the NHS staff with whom I came into contact helped me along at each stage of my treatment and surgery with explanations – communication was first class.

I think that very few people about to be admitted to hospital will search the shelves of their local library or Waterstone's to find such a book. They will take matters step by step from admission to discharge and be guided by their GP and hospital staff. I would like to think that it has a place in the early stages of training for nurses and doctors and other members of NHS staff who come into contact with patients.

Bowel cancer survivor of 6 years (Over 75) (March 2016)

This is a good reference guide to dip in and out of when facing a hospital visit so that you know a little bit about what to expect. It is logical and flows well; there isn't too much information, so it is not overwhelming, and it is easy to understand. The authors try hard not to be too technical but explain clearly when necessary and are not patronising. There is no glossary, but one shouldn't be necessary. The cover is not very inspiring and there are no photos.

I would keep this as a reference book. It covers a lot of the questions one might ask when facing a hospital visit, a longer stay, or treatment in hospital. The chapter on chemotherapy and radiotherapy is a good guide to what to expect, in clear language.

Living with breast cancer (46-55) (March 2016)

Although this book would be useful for anyone who has to go into hospital, it would be particularly useful for health professionals who work in that environment. Over time they can become complacent about their everyday environment and terminology and this can be very frightening for outsiders who visit only when there is a concern.

It is straightforward. Although there is no glossary, the language is appropriate for the lay person and the content is divided into appropriate sections. There are lots of good recommendations with useful tips and pre/post planning and the boxed key points/questions guide individuals in reaching a positive personal outcome. The cover looks appealing and overall the book has an empathetic tone.

I may recommend it. It could be very useful if the reader can maintain concentration. It is wordy, and the lack of illustrations and small font make it difficult to navigate. Good information can easily be dismissed if the reader feels overwhelmed.

Living with the consequences of cancer (46-55) (March 2016)

This is a very detailed overview of the hospital ecosystem and relevant to anyone who wants to learn how a hospital functions and what to expect. It is useful for helping to formulate questions to ask about your condition, diagnostics and medical procedures surrounding it, and how to manage your admission, stay and discharge.

There is one specific cancer-related chapter (17) about receiving chemotherapy and radiotherapy so in this sense it is useful for patients choosing those treatments. However, it is an overall guide to the process of being a hospital patient and I found it useful to read prior to my own hospital admittance and subsequent breast cancer surgery. While reading, it helped me focus on the areas that were more important to me, being a naturally curious and thorough reader, I read it from cover to cover.

I do like the cover design and overall layout. It is easy to understand, but one has to pay attention. The authors have taken on the challenge of covering a massive topic with its own specific terminology and this makes for a dense read. The print could be a shade or two darker and perhaps 1 size larger for ease of reading. I would liken it to a very good basic primer for medical students and because of this lay readers may find the amount of information a lot to absorb.

Each chapter has a box of questions that a patient may want to ask medical staff regarding care and that will aid the decision-making process. However, there is no index to these questions to quickly ascertain the most relevant points for discussion before deciding on reading the corresponding chapter(s) in depth. An index in the next edition will help patients get through the book quickly and focus on the most relevant chapters for them. I like the inclusion of the Appendix of useful resources and the information for patients regarding their rights in the NHS.

I am grateful to the authors and publisher for tackling this subject. It is an intelligent book written by medical professionals who have also been patients. For a first-time non-emergency admission (my case) it is a very good book to read, at least four weeks before admission so that you have time to ask pertinent treatment questions.

Breast cancer patient (invasive lobular ductal carcinoma) (46-55) (February 2016)

This gives an overall picture of what going into hospital may entail and covers the topic in a logical order, from going to see your GP through to discharge from hospital. It is a book to pick up as required, to use more as reference to answer or explain what you may expect. It is a very useful insight into what happens in hospital and the tests that may be undertaken. The piece on what to take into hospital is not that helpful – there wouldn't be enough space to store everything suggested!

It is written very simply with any medical terminology well explained. The typeface is good and the 'box' system helpful. The cover is busy and not that helpful – you don't really read the text in the boxes – but the colours are eye catching.

Overall, it is a good book with a wealth of information about a hospital journey. It is useful for anyone being admitted to hospital and answers many questions that patients may not ask. It should allay any fears and worries. I would not necessarily recommend it to cancer patients as there is only one chapter specifically for them.

Friend of cancer patient (56-65) (January 2016)



This would be useful to a range of people as it covers what to expect in hospital; this is great if you have no experience of the system. It explains in detail what you should expect when you are admitted and walks you through the complicated procedures.

It is largely in a good order, although you can jump to the most relevant chapter so order isn't that important. Everything is detailed to enable you to understand it. I didn't notice any inaccuracies but being in hospital is a very personal experience and I could add experiences of my own.

It is a detailed, long book that provides a lot of relevant information, but it is perhaps not for everyone. It's difficult as there is so much to cover, and it is a complicated

topic. It could be an excellent reference book, where you can flip to the sections relevant for your situation and ensure you are not missing any vital instructions. It also prepares you for what is coming next and manages your expectations.

Living with someone with terminal cancer (sarcoma) (36-45) (December 2016)

This informative book would be very useful to organise thoughts and use as a guide. People are usually disoriented and need information to be repeated to them. It is very easy to understand but some information is repeated, and some is mundane. It was probably written in this way for those who read only the parts that interest them. The format should be more interesting, some illustrations would be good. It should be easier to find certain information. It is difficult to find parts of interest.

I like the menus and the information about the role of different staff at different stages. Patients can follow their stay and know who to expect to be around them. It is quite useful. It does not specialise in cancer but is written to help everyone. It would be useful to organise initial thoughts about treatment but there is quite a bit of room for improvement.

My father died of cancer a few years back. His illness came as a great shock to us all because he was healthy and fit. He died two months after diagnosis; the cancer was already in metastasis. There was no hospital treatment and all we could do was watch him perish until the very end. At the time, I read much information and desperately tried to find a cure. Sadly, there was no cure but everything I read prepared me very well for conversations with doctors and nurses. As I watched them work I knew what was going on and the reasons for their actions.

'Going into hospital?' is a great collection of information. It would be very handy for any patient and carers/family to have list of questions when they are visiting hospital. Everyone walking through the door should know about hygiene procedures and the products available as described in this book.

Father died from cancer (unknown but bile duct suspected) (46-55) (June 2016)

This is suitable for anyone who is planning for a stay in hospital for the first time or those who want to increase their knowledge of the hospital setting to support others. It gives a general guide to cancer treatments, including chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which could be helpful to the patient, their carer or family member. However, for those trying to manage a particular condition and needing information and guidance relating to this, then it is probably not the book for them.

It flows well in that the authors have tried to keep it in a logical order and used box numbers to indicate where further information can be found. It appears to be accurate, factual, and concise and it is very easy to read, using simple, everyday language, without jargon, that can be understood by most people. The authors have also managed to make the hospital journey interesting and explained the terminology used throughout the book. The front cover is appealing and tries to depict what the book is about from the words on the cover. The size of the text is appropriate to the

audience and the way in which the writers explain the process is also interesting and illustrated well within the general layout.

As a healthcare professional and an informal carer to someone with cancer, I can see that this book would appeal to a wide range of people. I like the way the writers give the reader an interesting journey through the hospital setting, focusing in on good hygiene practices, the roles of others within the setting, practical arrangements, treatment options for cancer as well as some of the vulnerable groups such as the young and old. As an informal carer for someone with cancer, I feel it would be an interesting read for those supporting a loved one in hospital for an operation rather than looking for specific information relating to a type of cancer.

This book is basically a walk-through guide to protocols within the hospital setting from admission through to discharge. It will guide the reader as to various treatment options available in relation to cancer, but it does not specify particular conditions. It could be useful if you are finding it difficult negotiating a clinical setting for the first time, planning for an operation, or want basic information relating to treatment options for cancer. I found it interesting from different angles because it gives the reader an insight into a clinical setting and what is expected. I felt that I wanted to read the book and it kept me interested by explaining some of the terminology. Considering it is written by medical professionals, it is structured in such a way that it is easy to read and understand, informative and gives a sense of what it is like to be cared for within a hospital setting.

Health and Social Care Assessor (36-45) (June 2016)

This is useful to dip into. The authors discuss various procedures and treatments and most people or carers faced with cancer diagnosis and treatment will find it useful. However, I'm not sure that it is more comprehensive than the Macmillan booklets.

The cover is appealing, and the content is in a logical order but the font is small and in times of stress, this might be off putting, however useful the content. Illustrations to break up the text (e.g. an operating theatre and scanning machines) might be helpful. Technical words are explained but a glossary would be useful as would an index. The contact details are clearly laid out.

It could be a useful general resource for those facing hospital (it is full of useful advice, clearly explained), but when I was being treated I found the Macmillan leaflets useful and comforting. They are easy to read, not intimidating and I would recommend those before this book.

Bowel cancer patient, now clear (56-65) (May 2016)

This is a high-level introduction only and many readers would need to supplement it with other information. The best advice is stated consistently throughout: (a) establish a dialogue with health professionals; (b) maintain notes about people seen, advice given, and decisions made, so that the patient/carer/family can track the case.

There is some general information on the generic roles/job titles of the health professionals that one is likely to see in hospital. However, although there is a small section on cancer, there is no reference to oncologists. This is a significant gap (especially as there is specific reference to other specialists elsewhere). There is a very brief reference to Macmillan and Marie Curie nursing services, which is good.

It flows well and is in a good order. Everyday language is used where possible, which is good considering that the three authors have very technical backgrounds. It is a good size physically and the typeface/paper quality is good. Perhaps it is a bit too text based. A few of the items could be explained in another way, e.g. flow diagrams.

It meets its objective to give broad advice about going into hospital, irrespective of the patient's illness. However, I feel that it is not much more than a reasonably well-informed person would know anyway. One final point: it seems rather selfish, given that patients are the most important people to consider, but a hospital stay, especially if extended, puts a lot of pressure on families or carers (usually one and the same). I was hoping for more advice for these people about how it will affect their own day-to-day lives. This impact can often be considerable and frequently goes unnoticed and has not been covered in this book. I gave it three stars solely because it meets its broad goal, i.e. outlining the process of going into hospital, staying in, and leaving.

Carer (father has prostate cancer, mother has sarcoma) (56-65) (January 2016)



For health professionals needing an overview of different aspects of hospital care, this book summarises the main departments in a relatively simple way. Chapters 12 and 17 (Treating cancer with chemotherapy and radiotherapy) are the most useful for cancer patients, Chapter 12 (Blood tests and samples) summarises the different blood tests and why they are required. Cancer patients undergo various blood tests and it may be helpful to understand why they are monitored so closely. Chapter 17 explains the concepts behind chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and their side effects.

The information is very easy to understand, and medical terms are explained in a very simplistic manner. The chapters are not in any order, as they each describe an aspect of going into hospital. Within each chapter, information is usually laid out in a logical way, with headings to break up the text. The book has a modern design that, although slightly clinical, reflects the title. The paper quality is pleasant, and the overall layout is easily understood, with paragraphs, tables, and patient experiences to break up the monotony of information delivery. The tone reflects the clinical approach that the medical authors would use; they are trying to write in a friendly, explanatory way, but at times this can come across as patronising.

In the chapter on radiotherapy, it is not clearly explained that side effects are highly dependent on the area receiving treatment. For example, the authors describe hair loss as a side effect, but this happens only in having treatment to the head or pubic area and hair loss is localised. Usually one or two squares of hair will be lost, rather than all the hair. This simply represents where the radiation beam enters the body

and unlike certain types of chemotherapy, not all the hair will be lost. Feeling sick is also a localised side effect if someone is having radiotherapy to the abdomen. For someone having radiotherapy to the breast will not experience hair loss or nausea as the treatment field is only applied to the breast area.

For those interested in a specific procedure or element of hospital care, individual chapters are a good summary of what to expect. However, a vast amount of the information does not apply to most cancer patients. There is too much general information that patients and families will already know. Advice such as turning up on time and remembering what to pack is slightly patronising; people will know this themselves, their true interest is in the procedure that they are about to undergo. The useful information needs to be sieved out, as several chapters describe procedures and processes that people may not undergo. Overwhelming amounts of information are not useful for patients as they are usually shocked from their diagnosis and are best able to process concise explanations rather than pages of data. Individuals may find the sections that apply to them interesting, but inevitably, no one person will require the entire book.

Therapeutic radiography student (Under 25) (August 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.

We're here to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws your way, we're right there with you.

For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit macmillan.org.uk

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