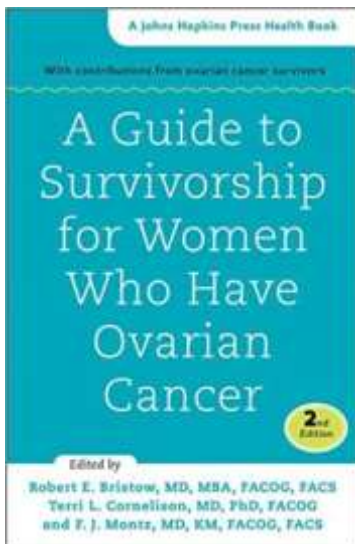


**MACMILLAN**  
**CANCER SUPPORT**  
RIGHT THERE WITH YOU

# BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



## **A guide to survivorship for women who have ovarian cancer (2015)**

Bristow RE, Cornelison TL, Montz FJ.  
Baltimore, MD (USA): Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015.  
320pp.  
ISBN 9781421417547.

**Average star rating 4.0 (out of 5)**

**Macmillan Cancer Support**  
**89 Albert Embankment**  
**London SE1 7UQ**

**These reviews were written by people affected by cancer and are not the views of Macmillan Cancer Support. These reviews, and the publications reviewed, should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, Macmillan does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this review or publication or third-party information or websites included or referred to in it.**



This book has information not only on ovarian cancer itself but also on how to ease the physical and emotional impact. It begins with a chapter on “What is ovarian cancer”, then proceeds logically through treatment, surgery, pain, side-effects, and recurrent disease, to end of life. It also handles wellbeing, nutrition and social needs and is focused on seeing things from the perspective of what the patient wants.

It is an American publication so not everything will stand true for those being treated in the UK. It would be nice to have an English version to know what some of the end-of-life options are. That said, most of it is about the disease itself and the side-effects of treatment, and references to US-specific treatments are minimal.

It is easy to understand. The text is interspersed with first-hand experiences from patients, relevant to the topic discussed. Any technical terms are explained as they are used in the text and the comprehensive index allows you to find specific information. The cover is bright with the title in a large font. The font inside is of sufficient size to be read easily. The authors focus on quality of life and patient self-determination and the text and language reflect this. There are no pictures or illustrations, but none are really needed. Data tables are included where appropriate.

I like the honest and frank way in which the book is written, nothing sugar is coated. However, it sometimes tells you things you may not want to hear or address. Some things were hard to read particularly as they are relevant to my current situation.

It is a strange turn of phrase, given the topic, but I love this book! It has lots of information on treatment options, drugs and their side effects as well as social aspects. It brings up things that you may not have thought of and gives ideas on how to resolve them. It confirmed the treatment I've had and posed questions I hadn't thought of asking my consultant. I recommend it to anyone with ovarian cancer who wants to know more about the cancer, its treatment, and how to live during and after treatment. There is plenty of information to help you to make informed choices and be in control of what happens to you. I recommend it, but with the caveat to read the chapter heading and decide if you want to read the information it contains.

**Living with ovarian cancer (46-55) (October 2018)**



This goes into all aspects of ovarian cancer from possible causes to treatment, side effects – physical and mental – and how nutrition can help your recovery.

I found it easy to understand but I can see how some people may struggle, especially the sections on the types of ovarian cancer and its treatment. It does look like a textbook, so much so that my family thought I had started studying again.

It is the first book of this type I have read and I definitely recommend it to anyone with ovarian cancer, especially those at the start of the journey. I know I will go back to it, especially after any change in my condition, side effects or treatment. It's the first time I feel I know why I got ovarian cancer and why the treatment I am on is the best – I felt reassured after finishing it. Some of it isn't relevant to me, but who knows what the future may bring.

### **Ovarian cancer patient (46-55) (March 2019)**

This book is well written by gynae oncology professionals with short contributions from patients. Although it is American, and this edition is from 2015, most of what is written is similar to current treatment in the UK. The topics include: an explanation of diagnosis and staging; treatments (surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy); symptom management; nutrition; genetic testing; and managing recurrent disease. Overall, the emphasis is on maintaining quality of life whilst living with ovarian cancer. There are some differences from the UK, especially regarding financial advice.

It is written in an informative and understandable way. The division of the different chapters is logical. The use of tables, lists with bullet points and sections in each chapter under their own headings makes each chapter easy to read and gives comprehensive information.

This book would be useful to patients, their carers/relatives and health professionals working in the gynae cancer specialism. It explains treatments in an understandable way and has useful tips for coping with treatment side-effects. I like that it maintains a positive outlook throughout and encourages women to maintain quality of life whilst living with or beyond ovarian cancer. However, patients with ovarian cancer may find it difficult to maintain a positive outlook all the time so may not always concur with the ethos of the book.

### **Gynae Oncology Nurse Specialist (46-55) (February 2019)**



It feels like this book has been written for healthcare professionals. Throughout, the terminology suggests that it is directed at health professionals who may be dealing with patients with ovarian cancer, e.g. the use of the term 'the patient' throughout. It covers the basics and is easy to understand for non-health professionals too but as someone living with ovarian cancer for several years, I didn't feel that it gave me any additional information to that which I already have. In fact, because I have a rarer type of ovarian cancer, I felt that it was missing some information, for example: there is increasing evidence that some types of ovarian cancer need to be managed and treated in a wholly different way and this is not reflected. The danger is that a health professional will assume that it is the correct protocol for all ovarian cancers, when increasing evidence shows that this is not the case.

As an example, the section on chemotherapy offers no reference to the treatment of the types of ovarian cancer for which chemotherapy is considered to be largely ineffective, or that this is even a consideration. The different hospitals tend to interpret this in different ways, resulting in patients with rarer types of ovarian cancer being recommended chemotherapy or not. In a book that purports to be "a guide", this is an important omission for people with rarer cancers. Those of us affected by this rarer type find ourselves repeatedly having to explain the treatment strategies recommended by our doctor to a range of people, including health professionals, outside of the oncology department. A book that suggests that it provides "detailed information on diagnosis and treatment" and includes "the latest developments in diagnosis and treatment" but then excludes key aspects of these things is not helpful.

The inclusion of the chapters covering survivorship is welcome, even if it is only a small part of the book at the end and is interspersed with the discussions around end-of-life care. For many women with ovarian cancer, survivorship is more than a consideration of how we want to spend the time we have left: it's about being treated as an equal rather than being treated as if we're on death row; it's about practicalities such as booking a holiday (many of us don't like to do this too far in advance for various reasons but then it means we can't look forward to something too far in the future), travel insurance (can often involve lengthy conversations about whether a tumour was embedded in your bladder wall or just touching it), money worries, pensions, having to plan things around knowing where the nearest toilets are. These things perhaps are better covered in a book written by someone with cancer, but they are relevant to overall quality of life on a day-to-day basis.

For those of us with the rare cancers, survivorship often becomes intermingled with learning a lot of information about our cancers ourselves. Many of us go to our oncologist with information we have found so that we can discuss it. This book does not reflect the reality of patients doing that or even feeling that they need to do that. It is written in a way that suggests that health professionals will have all the answers, particularly if they read this book, and the patients will come to them to find out those answers. Sadly, this is not always the case and health professionals need to be prepared for this. In this respect, I find the book a little patronising towards patients.

Overall, I welcome more information being available on ovarian cancer, particularly for health professionals. It does not appear to be well understood outside of the gynaecology oncology department and far too often I find I am treated with a perception that I have followed a similar path to someone with a very different but more well-known type of cancer. This book does raise the profile of ovarian cancer and generally highlights some of the differences, which is something worth doing.

**Living with ovarian cancer (36-45) (July 2019)**

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

**© Macmillan Cancer Support, July 2019**

**Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SCO39907) and the Isle of Man (604).**