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BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



Tom has lymphoma (November 2018)

CLIC Sargent and Lymphoma Action.
London: CLIC Sargent and Lymphoma Action,
November 2018.
28pp.

Average star rating 4.2 (out of 5)

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This is a very good explanation of lymphoma and will be useful at diagnosis and throughout treatment. It is beautifully written with an excellent glossary and good explanations of scans, health professionals, and Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The illustrations of the scanner and Hickman line are very good.

I like that this book has lots of positivity, talking through whole diagnosis with individualised treatment. I like the excellent explanations about lymphoma and the additional support network numbers for CLIC Sargent and Lymphoma Action.

Highly recommended.

Retired Macmillan Nurse (56-65) (June 2019)

This book could be read at any time, and it would probably be useful to revisit it over time. It is easy to understand, and I like the illustrations. The writer has managed to reduce what can be quite a big subject down to the bare minimum; it could have covered so much but that would be confusing for a child. They have mainly focussed on Hodgkin lymphoma – the most likely one for a child to be diagnosed with – and put just enough in for a child to understand.

Health care professional dealing with lymphoma (46-55) (March 2019)

This is best read as soon as possible after diagnosis, but would be useful at any stage as it's very reassuring. It will be useful for a child with lymphoma and their parent(s), but also for their siblings.

I like how the story is told and the appearance of the book; I think many children of that age will be able to relate to it. It is simple and informative. The glossary is very useful, all medical jargon is explained, and the language is suitable for children.

I like the simplicity of this book. It informs the reader but reassures them and will give them the sense that what they're going through happens to many people and isn't something to be afraid of.

Child of a parent with lymphoma (18-25) (March 2019)

The following reviews are of earlier editions



A very helpful book for anyone caring for children with lymphoma. It is probably most useful at diagnosis and revisited during treatment if appropriate. I love the positive and sensitive way the story is told and how the illustrations support this approach – all the information is given logically within the story format. It is attractively and sensitively illustrated. There is a glossary, allowing the story to flow. The language makes it more suitable for children probably from about seven up, but the story could still be told by an adult simply using the pictures for slightly younger children.

Another carefully composed and sensitively approached book from CLIC Sargent.

Kidney cancer (RCC) survivor and retired primary teacher (66-75) (October 2015)



This is written and reviewed by professionals working with childhood cancer, so the information is accurate and up to date. There is, however, an acknowledgement that not all cancer experiences are the same and may differ slightly. It could be read at any stage as it contains full, but simple, explanations of what happens.

The information is told well and at an appropriate level for children. It is quite complex as there is so much to take in, but it is easy to understand as the language is clear. All terminology is explained in a glossary, but procedures and types of treatment are explained as they occur. There are a lot of words and few illustrations compared to other books of this type, so it feels aimed more at older children. Younger ones would have to read it with an adult or have it read to them. The illustrations are “hand drawn”, which adds a friendly quality, but not too twee to embarrass older readers.

There is an honesty throughout, which I like, and no sugar coating. To the more adult reader there is a clear subliminal message that once treatment is finished, there is no guarantee that the cancer will not return, but to younger children this is not obvious.

Living with cancer (myelodysplastic syndrome) and former teacher of 3-16-year-old children with SEN (46-55) (January 2018)

This would be quite useful if given to child as soon as possible or just before the results, so they know what’s to come. It explains about treatment and what they might have to go through. It is a straightforward, easy read for a child, with good plain text. It would be good to have pronunciations in brackets after medical words to help with how to say the word. The cover is bright with a smiley child, and the illustrations in the book are good and explain what Tom is doing, e.g. Tom having PET scan.

To me it seems rushed. It could be more of an adventure; young children love going on adventures. It mentions Tom's family on the first page but does not mention them again, maybe the family could be more involved throughout the book.

My daughter had lymphoma (46-55) (November 2017)

This book is written for younger children using simple language. It is bright, glossy and colourful and I like its simple style, although I wish Tom had a nose!

There are no "talking points" – sentences that actively encourage a child to talk about their worries – nor does the book discuss how the child may be feeling. It is important to recognise that a child may well have mixed emotions during treatment and this should be recognised and discussed. Tom's siblings are mentioned only briefly: how are they coping with his illness and visits to the hospital; who is looking after them; are they worried or angry? Recognising that cancer affects siblings is important.

Breast cancer survivor (46-55) (February 2010)



This could be a good resource for a newly diagnosed child who is living with and having treatment for lymphoma. It would also be useful for family and friends and in schools if pupils have a friend with lymphoma. It has lots of information and the story is told in a very matter-of-fact, straight-to-the-point way that a child will understand.

I like how the story is told, but the information needs expanding in a few places. It is easy to understand most of the time and appropriate for children, but some words need explaining in the text and the glossary. The title is nice and clear on the cover. The illustrations could be more attractive, and more colour throughout would brighten it up. Sometimes the paragraphs are too long – for example, pages 8 and 9 – and the text could be broken up with illustrations or bands of colour.

I like that it gives a child with lymphoma a reassuring look at diagnosis and treatment in a way they can understand. I don't like the inaccurate use of words in relation to what a child will perceive, and how it brushes over radiotherapy. It states that if Tom needed to have radiotherapy he would meet doctors who would plan the X-ray treatment, but this could confuse children. Many will have come across the term X-ray: they or a family member may have had one; many alphabets use X for X-ray; or they may have been taught about it in science lessons. It's misleading; radiotherapy is not like that and could be explained better. Tom does not need radiotherapy (his treatment ends after chemotherapy), but other children might. Why not say that, although Tom does not need radiotherapy, he met a friend at the hospital who does, and this is what happened? I don't like how Tom says "Hoorah!" when he knows that he does not need more treatment. Yes, it is lucky for him and many others, but not for a child reading this who needs more; this needs explaining.

The glossary is not sufficient. MRI, CT and PET should be explained in the text and glossary. Many children are inquisitive, and it would not take a lot to explain it in the text after the abbreviation. Ultrasound is mentioned in the text, but not explained in the glossary. Oncologist is explained in the glossary, but not psychologist. The booklet needs improvement to make it a more comprehensive, attractive and useful resource for all.

Breast cancer patient with six grandchildren (46-44) (November 2017)

This book will be useful after diagnosis. It is a well-structured book with good detail and is therefore a good resource to explain aspects of lymphoma and its treatment to children to help answer some of their questions. It is appropriate for children aged 10 and above; younger children's attention span may wane, particularly on pages where there is a lot of text and no illustrations. I don't particularly like the illustrations. I read the book with my six-year-old son and he found it very hard to understand (hence my recommendation on age groups). He did not like the illustrations either. The glossary of terms was well received.

Lymphoma patient (36-45) (February 2012)

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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