

B O O K S

Palliative Care: A Patient-Centered Approach. Geoffrey Mitchell. New York: Radcliffe Publishing, 2008, 168 pages, \$49.95.

✓ Softcover



Palliative Care: A Patient-Centered Approach is part of a series of topic-specific books written to illustrate the application of the patient-centered clinical approach—a method described in the overview book *Patient-Centered Medicine—Transforming the Clinical Method* (2003). This approach to patient care focuses on balancing caring and curing in providing care for patients in the 21st century. Written for clinicians by authors from Australia and England, the nine chapters follow a conceptual framework consisting of six components.

• Exploring both the disease and the illness experience
• Understanding the whole person
• Finding common ground
• Incorporating illness and health promotion
• Enhancing the clinician-patient relationship
• Being realistic

Although the book claims to be written for clinicians and educators in the medical, nursing, and allied health professions, the focus is primarily on the general practitioner. Palliative care includes care of all patients who face life-limiting illnesses. Following the first chapter that introduces the approach, subsequent chapters focus on various aspects of palliative care. One chapter explores ways to

address the palliative care needs of a society. An epidemiologic approach is used to illustrate how to address a community's need for palliative care, focusing on disenfranchised populations such as homeless, black, and other minority populations and older adults. Another chapter provides an overview of the dying process, from a physiologic view, emphasizing the process of multiple organ failure. These two chapters are followed by a chapter that addresses the disease approach and the patient's perspective of the illness experience using case studies for illustration. Another chapter focuses on the losses that occur with patients at the end of life and those close to them. The impact of those losses is described in terms of grieving, suffering, and mourning. Through a case study approach, the losses, recommendations, and care approaches are shown in adults and children who are dying and in the parents or caretakers of children. Another chapter focuses on the myriad of symptoms found in caring for patients with life-threatening diseases, and includes pain, nausea, dyspnea, and fatigue among others. Pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic approaches are described. In a chapter on communication and relationships, the role of the family practitioner as advocate, team leader, and navigator of a complex medical system is described and demonstrated in a case study. The final content chapter addresses health promotion and palliative care. Emphasized is the need to start palliative care early in the course of the disease and continuing throughout the disease trajectory.

Although the book is extensive in scope, the content is essentially superficial. Larger and more definitive textbooks will be needed by the clinician learning about and practicing palliative care. In addition, the patient-centered approach, which apparently is new to medicine, has been an organizing concept in nursing education since the 1960s. Combining the pathophysiologic description of the dying process with the psychosocial

concerns of family, communication, and patient goals is the approach used in palliative care nursing textbooks. Nevertheless, this new book can serve as a primer for those involved in palliative care and may be of value in improving the quality of interdisciplinary palliative care.

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Cancer Activism: Gender, Media, and Public Policy. Karen M. Kedrowski and Marilyn Stine Sarow (Eds.). Chicago: University of Illinois, 2007, 288 pages, \$40.

✓ Hardcover



Cancer Activism: Gender, Media, and Public Policy chronicles two cancer advocacy movements: breast and prostate cancer. Comprised of three major sections, each chapter is filled with historic milestones, outlining the

genesis and progression of both areas of cancer advocacy. The authors, Karen Kedrowski, professor and chair in the Department of Political Science, and Marilyn Stine Sarow, associate professor of Mass Communications, are social scientists and very ably use qualitative and quantitative approaches when describing the successes and challenges associated with each movement.

Consistent with the authors' goal, the book provides an excellent discussion on the influence of grass roots organizations, the media, and public policy in shaping and influencing both movements. The authors underscore that the breast cancer movement emerged as one of the strongest and most influential movements in cancer advocacy history, surpassing the prostate cancer movement and serving as a model for other movements to come. Breast and prostate cancer survivors are credited with spearheading the movements, resulting

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Quick, on-the-spot resource	Basic	Pocket size
Moderate time requirement	Intermediate	Intermediate
In-depth study	Advanced and complex, prerequisite reading required	Desk reference

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