

The Prostate Cancer Treatment Book

Edited by Peter D. Grimm, DO; John C. Blasko, MD; and John E. Sylvester, MD. 224 pps. The McGraw-Hill Companies, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. 2003. \$14.95.

This book, written in a question-and-answer format, presents abundant information about prostate cancer, the most common type of cancer in men.

I did not get off to a good start with this book, finding a mistake and a misspelling within the first six pages. The author states, "The average size of the prostate is about 30 to 40 grams." In actuality, the size of the prostate gland typically falls between 15 g and 20 g. Later in the book, the term *prostatitis* is spelled "prostatis." Perhaps I am nitpicking, but a book written by professionals that is intended for laymen should have been more carefully checked for errors.

The first two chapters cover the anatomy and function of the prostate. However, these chapters also cover topics such as prostatitis and benign prostatic hyperplasia. One must ask whether these inclusions are necessary in a book directed to lay readers who are investigating prostate cancer.

Although the authors present several worthwhile discussions throughout the book, many of the questions that are

posed are notably technical and not likely to be asked by most patients. In fact, I believe nearly every chapter of this book covers too much information for the average layperson to absorb.

Chapters that are devoted to the treatment of patients with prostate cancer discuss observation, surgery, radiation, and hormonal options, but again, include an excess of information for each. Further, a bias toward brachytherapy seems apparent, as 17 pages are devoted to radical prostatectomy and 61 pages to radiotherapy, with most directed toward brachytherapy.

Another concern is that topics that are the subjects of debate by experts in the field are addressed with information that is presented as factual. An example of this concerns the timing of hormonal therapy and penile rehabilitation.

As this text is more than 200 pages long and contains excessive and overly technical information, I believe it is more appropriate as a text for primary care physicians. Although its premise is good, this book is overdone for its target audience: patients in whom cancer of the prostate gland has been diagnosed.

Leonard H. Finkelstein, DO

Vice Chancellor
Professor of Surgery
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania