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## BOOK REVIEW

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### MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF ORAL AND HEAD AND NECK CANCER, A SURVIVOR'S GUIDE

By Nancy E. Leupold, James J. Sciubba, Plural Publishing, San Diego, CA, 2008, 217 pp, \$24.99

*A Survivor's Guide* is the result of an ambitious project of the founders of the group Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer, Inc. (SPOHNC). It is a compilation of chapters contributed by various professionals, encompassing a large spectrum of issues in head and neck cancer, from basic anatomy to dealing with insurance claims, and everything in between.

Because it is directed primarily to the survivors, the book does not address end-of-life issues, but otherwise certainly fulfills its description as having something for everyone. As I reviewed this book, I could not help but to respond to each chapter with thoughts of how my head and neck cancer patients and their families would react to, or benefit from, this information. I also saw it with the eyes of 30 years' experience in general otolaryngology, but also mindful of my students and primary care colleagues.

Providers, nurses, speech and language pathologists, and their students would certainly find the chapters on anatomy, treatment planning, radiation, and chemotherapy an excellent overview of the disease, while many of my patients or their families might find some of this information a bit technical or

overwhelming. The chapters covering targeted therapy, swallowing, communications, dental care, and nutrition should be a must-read for every patient as well as for those people involved in their care. There is also included a practical guide to clinical trials, with an extensive source list to access clinical trials information.

A rare find was the inclusion of financial topics. Paying for head and neck cancer care is sometimes an afterthought, yet can be just as ruinous as the disease itself. This book addresses how to deal with U.S. health insurance, fight for medically necessary dental care, and apply for disability benefits. Patient rights and disability regulations are well delineated and crystal clear here.

Perhaps the chapter most useful to all readers is the one entitled "Products, Therapies, and Survivor Input: Resources for Coping with the Challenges of Side Effects of Treatment." It is full of lists of items that soothe dry mouth, mucositis, trismus, pain, and many other problems associated with treatment, as well as product sources. The authors have also included a generous list of resources, support groups, and websites for additional information. This alone is worth the price of the book, and reveals the broad expertise and intense devotion of these authors to improve the daily lives of head and neck cancer patients.

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