Volk, Ruti. **The Medical Library Association Guide to Cancer Information: Authoritative, Patient-Friendly, Print and Electronic Resources.** New York, NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2007. 372 p. \$85.00 USD, ISBN-10: 1-55570-585-5; ISBN-13: 978-1-55570-585-5

In 2007, 159,900 Canadians received a diagnosis of cancer (Canadian Cancer Society). There is a plethora of information about cancer, particularly on the Internet, but many sites have inaccurate and potentially dangerous information. The right information at the right time can empower consumers to make the best decisions about treatment and coping with cancer.

This guide began as an expansion of bibliographies that Volk developed at the Patient Education Resource Center at the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center. Drawing on her experience as a parent who had lost a child to cancer, Volk's goal for this guide was to "enable patients and caregivers to quickly locate quality information sources and reduce time spent on information seeking." (xiv)

The book is divided into three parts:

- Part I provides a knowledge base for anyone providing cancer information to the public, such as key concepts and terminology; there are chapters on childhood cancer essentials and "beyond cancer," discussing advanced information sources, such as news, webcasts, rare cancers, and information in other languages
- Part II provides an overview and treatment options for 25 adult cancer types and 10 childhood cancer types
- Part III covers topics common to all cancers, such as prevention, treatment methods, and quality-of-life concerns

Cancer types were selected based on their high annual incidence of diagnoses within the United States. The criteria for inclusion of resources was that they were authoritative and in patient-friendly language. In order to ensure the medical validity of the information in the guide, a multi-disciplinary Review Board and Advisory Panel reviewed specific areas.

The chapters on types of cancer follow a similar format. They include anatomical facts, a brief overview (covering incidence, risk factors, progression and treatment), key resources with helpful annotated lists of brochures/booklets, books and audiovisual resources, Web resources focusing on the specific cancer being discussed, general cancer sites that have sections discussing the specific cancer, and a list of patient-support organizations.

The book does not attempt to be exhaustive, but provides starting points for efficient information seeking. To my delight, some key Canadian resources,

such as the Canadian Cancer Society and the BC Cancer Agency and Cancer Information Centre, are included. Although there is an index, it is very selective for organizations: it would have been helpful to have included all the organizations mentioned in the text. A glossary is not provided because most terms are explained in the text, or readers are referred to the National Cancer Institute's **Dictionary of Cancer Terms** available at www.cancer.gov

All librarians providing health information to consumers could benefit from the clear and concise information presented in Chapter 1: "Cancer 101 (a): the Cancer Essentials". It covers both the climate that is beneficial to empathetically assisting those seeking cancer information and the general approach that is crucial to locating the most useful and relevant information.

This book is highly recommended for all health sciences libraries, particularly for consumer health and patient education centres. It covers the spectrum of issues and resources related to cancer information and to my knowledge, there are no comparable publications.

Works Cited:

Canadian Cancer Society. General cancer stats for 2007. Accessed 26 Sept.

2007 <http://cancer.ca/ccs/internet/standard/0,2283,3172_14423__langId-en,00.html>.

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