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<https://www.cancer.org.au/assets/pdf/cancer-forum-march-2012>

Pancreatic Cancer – A Patient and His Doctor Balance Hope and Truth

Reviewed by: Raymond Chan, Cancer Care Services, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Queensland.

Book details: Michael Lippe and Dung Le
A Johns Hopkins University Press (2011)
ISBN: 978-1-4214-0062-4
RRP: US\$18.95 (paperback)
171 pages

Review

This book comprises 11 chapters, alternating between two authors (a patient with metastatic pancreatic cancer and an oncologist).

Prior to the cancer diagnosis, Mr Lippe (the patient) was first diagnosed with a cardiac condition and was seeing a cardiologist. In 2007, the sign of epigastric pain eventually led him to see the cardiologist's wife (Dr Le), who happened to be an oncologist specialising in pancreatic cancer.

The stated aim of this book is to serve as a resource for those who work with or are trying to come to grips with pancreatic cancer. Although this book focuses on the author whose disease is advanced at diagnosis, there is a supplemental section at the end providing additional information in relation to other stages of pancreatic cancer.

This book provides you with a movie experience - the authors describe their experience in such a detailed way from pre-diagnosis of the disease to the adjustment of death. For example, the patient describes how the first sign appeared, how calm the oncologist was during the first consultation, even the temperature and the length of trip they had to travel for their appointment. The chapters written by the medical oncologist are very readable for lay people. The medical information in these chapters is illustrated with diagrams and simple terms.

No matter how experienced a professional might be in dealing with patients with pancreatic cancer, it is refreshing to hear from the patient's perspective, reading how they navigate through the system before they land in our clinic and receive our care.

Overall, I would recommend this book to all health professionals who care for patients with pancreatic cancer (both novice and seasoned), as well as those who are adjusting to a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer.

Raymond Chan, Cancer Care Services, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Queensland.