

Book Reviews/ Évaluation des livres

Head Injury Recovery in Real Life

Author: Larry Schutz and Michael Schutz
Publisher: Plural Publishing Inc.
Cost: \$43.95
Reviewer: Loralee MacLean
Affiliation: Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and University of Toronto

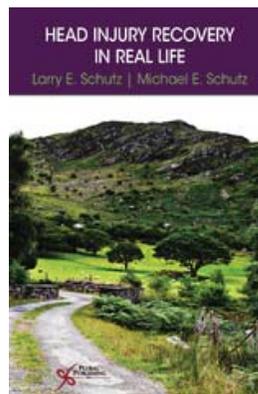
This book presents cases of patients who suffered severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) and who have made, in the authors' words, "great recoveries." Their exemplary stories were selected from over 1,600 working-age TBI patients who were seen by the senior author in an outpatient cognitive rehab program. These individuals suffered severe injuries that resulted in lasting deficits and yet they were able to compensate for their obstacles and live fulfilling, successful lives.

The authors state that the book was written for three types of readers: the survivors and their families, cognitive rehabilitation professionals and rehabilitation sciences students of different disciplines. Larry Schutz is a clinical neuropsychologist who has practiced in TBI rehab for over 25 years. Michael Schutz is a journalist who made the text easy to read and understand.

The first two chapters provide an overview of research on TBI treatment and outcomes of intervention. The authors discuss the hidden deficits that become more apparent once the patient goes home and how these deficits impact daily life. Clinic-based training to compensate for deficits frequently fails to help the individual cope in the real world. The authors highlight the importance of developing patients' insight into their deficits in order to optimize their recovery.

Chapter 3 describes 15 "treatment failures" who, according to the authors, were "functioning much like untreated, long-term survivors described in the follow-up research studied – unemployed, with limited or unrealistic career plans, experiencing behaviour and adjustment problems, and poorly adapted to post-injury life" (p. 61). The authors discuss why these individuals had failed and use these clients to provide a contrast to the cases of exceptional recoveries.

The exceptional cases that are the focus of this book are presented in chapters 4 to 15, one per chapter. The individuals were from a variety of backgrounds, socioeconomic situations and educational backgrounds. The chapters begin with interviews with each client (and sometimes family members). Each chapter includes information about life before the injury, a description of the accident, reports of the progress during early recovery,



and how each patient adapted to the deficits and managed them over time. At the end of each chapter, there is a section with the journalist Michael Schultz's impressions of the individual, giving a layman's perspective. The chapters are completed by a brief section with various neuropsychological measures and test results, as well as a timeline of the recovery from the hospital via the outpatient clinic to the post-discharge follow-up.

Chapter 16 is a more cursory description of another three cases. In the final chapter, the authors use the cases to develop their theory on how good recovery happens.

The authors emphasize throughout the book that the individuals described in chapters 4-15 are "best case scenarios" and not the norm. While it would be useful for a rehabilitation clinician to learn about living with TBI, I was uncertain what a family coping with a loved one with severe TBI could take from the book. While the book offers useful information to the families of affected individuals, it may also have the unwanted side effect of setting unrealistic expectations for recovery.

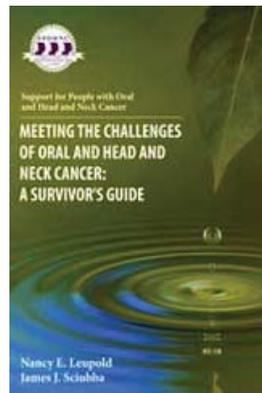
The book provides an important reminder to everyone involved in TBI rehabilitation about the incredible effort it takes for individuals with TBI to cope and succeed outside of the clinical setting. While the introductory chapters are rather technical, they provide a concise summary of the existing evidence and research related to TBI rehabilitation. The case presentations are interesting and engaging to read, and the contrast of treatment failures and successful recoveries helps the authors support their argument regarding factors that might support good outcomes.



Meeting the Challenges of Oral and Head and Neck Cancer: A Survivor's Guide

Author: Nancy Leupold, M.A.,
James Sciubba, D.M.D., Ph.D.
Publisher: Plural Publishing Inc.
Cost: \$27.50
Reviewer: Candace Myers, MSc
Affiliation: CancerCare Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba

This 217 page soft-cover book was edited by Nancy E. Leupold, a long-standing survivor of oral cancer and president and founder of Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer, Inc. (SPOHNC), and James J. Sciubba, MD, PhD, an otolaryngologist and head and neck surgeon affiliate with Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. He is also a founder and current vice president of SPOHNC.



The objective of the book is to address the consequences of head and neck cancers, including the process of coping with the diagnosis of cancer, as well as the life-changing alterations in appearance, speech, sense of taste, smell, swallowing and vision. The intended audience are patients, caregivers and health care professionals.

The book is divided into 11 chapters written by experts on head and neck cancer. This includes one chapter on "Meeting the Challenges of Communication and Swallowing Disorders" by Bonnie Martin-Harris and Julie Blair. Other topic areas include surgery, chemotherapy and radiation, nutrition, oral dental care and clinical trials. There is a useful index and an extensive section of products and therapies related to xerostomia, dental care and skin problems. The appendix covers programs for outreach and support, websites and literature.

Strengths include a useful section on anatomy and physiology for the lay reader, information on etiology including a current discussion of the Human Papilloma Virus, and well-written chapters on treatment modalities. The chapter on communication and swallowing is brief but provides a good overview. There is a list of books and autobiographies by people who have had first-hand experience, which may be of interest to some readers. References in each chapter are fairly current. Instructions on finding a speech-language pathologist are provided.

Weaknesses include insufficient attention to common and important survivor issues such as psychosocial effects (depression, anxiety), fatigue (including thyroid

dysfunction), and insomnia. The role of exercise is emerging as important to cancer survivorship and could have been addressed. Other useful additions would include information on self-examination, the role of the family physician, and decision-making regarding alternative or complementary therapies, and guidelines on evaluating internet resources. Sections on products, resources and insurance issues are clearly geared toward an American audience and may have limited benefit for Canadian readers.

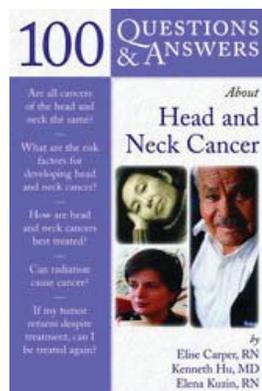
Overall, the book addresses most of its stated objectives. It would make a useful addition to a patient lending library for those with head and neck cancer. It would equally well provide an overview of patient issues to new clinicians working with this population.



100 Questions & Answers About Head and Neck Cancer

Author: Elise Carper, RN, MA, APRN-BC, AOCN
Kenneth Hu, MD
Elena Kuzin, RN, MS, APRN-BC, AOCN
Publisher: Jones and Bartlett Publishers
Cost: \$19.95
Reviewer: Candace Myers, MSc
Affiliation: CancerCare Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba

The book is written in lay language as a resource for patient and family members with newly diagnosed head and neck cancer. It presents common questions with answers that help to educate readers about the disease. The intended audience are patients and caregivers. The book is one of a series of “100 Questions & Answers” books on medical topics such as Alzheimer’s disease, brain tumors, gastroesophageal reflux disease, head injury, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, stroke and others that may be of interest to members of our profession.



The book is 120 pages, soft cover. The table of contents is organized into the following sections: Basics, Risk and Prevention, Screening and Diagnosis, Treatment, and Changes Cancer Brings. Each section includes a series of questions that might be typically asked by a person with head and neck cancer, such as: what are the risk factors for developing head and neck cancer? Can radiation cause cancer? If my tumor returns, can I get treated again? What are lymph nodes? Can I have children after treatment? What can I do about my dry mouth? Information is provided on such varied topics as stress management and coping techniques, telling family and others, and what to do when there is no cure. There is an appendix, glossary and index.

Strengths of the book include an excellent overview of major issues associated with head and neck cancer. The information is current, accurate, and consistent with state-of-the art diagnostic and treatment options in North America, including Canada. The descriptions of effects of disease and treatment – swallowing, dry mouth, hypothyroidism, and communication disorders (including speech post-total laryngectomy) – are brief but comprehensive. Other factors such as human papillomavirus etiology, nutrition, smoking cessation, emotional changes and psychosocial support, complementary therapies, talking with your doctor or care team, and palliation are addressed, though not in depth. The appendix includes a very useful Symptom Distress Thermometer, which has recently been endorsed by the Canadian Partnership Against

Cancer and the Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology. There are also samples of a health care proxy and a living will. The included commentary by head and neck cancer survivors is useful and informative.

A weakness for the Canadian reader is that only U.S. resources are listed. There are few websites and no guidelines on evaluating internet information. Again, there is little attention to exercise, which is increasingly seen as an important aspect of treatment and recovery.

Overall, this is a well-organized, brief, but comprehensive overview of head and neck cancer for patients, families and clinicians new to this area. This book would be an excellent addition to a patient library and a great primer for new S-LPs working with this population.

