



un médecin car une religion, en tant qu'expression culturelle, est une extraordinaire porte d'entrée pour rejoindre l'intimité même de la personne malade. Enfin, tout médecin lira avec intérêt les réflexions, à la fois profondes et simples, d'un de leurs confrères sur l'humilité qui doit habiter le médecin devant la mort.

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### Ask the Doctor: Breast Cancer

Vincent Friedewald, Aman U. Buzdar, Michael Bokulich. *Ask the Doctor* series. 136 pp. Illust. Andrews and McMeel, Kansas City. 1997. \$12.50. ISBN 0-8362-2710-7

<b>Overall rating:</b>	Excellent
<b>Strengths:</b>	Clearly written; practical; recognizes importance of emotional experience; encourages patient participation in decision-making and information seeking
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	Technical in places; references more pertinent in the US setting
<b>Audience:</b>	Patients, especially those newly diagnosed, and their families

Written specifically for the woman newly diagnosed with breast cancer, *Ask the Doctor: Breast Cancer* is a clear, comprehensive guide. The authors successfully balance their main purposes: to provide complex medical information that will allow patients to participate in treatment decisions and to provide support and practical guidelines for coping.

The book is organized and readable. There are chapters devoted to diagnosis and to each of the major treatment modalities: surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and hormonal

therapy. A special feature is the use of icons in the margins to highlight areas of interest (e.g., diet, heredity, information to discuss with your doctor).

The profound emotional stress experienced by women in this situation is recognized throughout the book. A second theme is the uniqueness of the breast cancer experience for each woman. One of the book's greatest strengths is the chapter "What is breast cancer?" Difficult concepts such as DNA damage and the role of genes in hereditary predisposition to breast cancer are discussed in an understandable fashion. The "It's your turn" sections at the end of each chapter are also useful, challenging readers to answer questions pertinent to their own situation.

"How are you doing?" gives useful advice regarding diet, exercise and coping with the emotional effects of treatment. Specific attention is given to work issues and to discussing the diagnosis with family, friends and colleagues. Another strength of this patient guide is the chapter devoted to the period following treatment completion. The authors recognize this time as one of the two periods of greatest emotional stress faced by patients.

There are some highly technical sections containing information unlikely to be of interest to the average reader. Other weaknesses are references to several chemotherapeutic regimens no longer in common use and the inclusion of sections related to recurrent or metastatic disease in chapters that deal with primary and adjuvant therapies. An unfortunate limitation of the book is that information on support groups and cancer information services is not generally applicable to the Canadian setting.

Despite these weaknesses, *Ask the Doctor: Breast Cancer* can be highly recommended to most patients with breast cancer. It presents the experience and the treatment decision-making process in a positive light. Pa-

tients will benefit from its practical yet compassionate dealing with what is often a difficult and frightening situation.

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### On Call Cardiology

M. Gabriel Khan. *On Call Series*. 343 pp. Illust. Harcourt Brace. 1997. \$28.95. ISBN 0-7216-6848-8

<b>Overall rating:</b>	Good
<b>Strengths:</b>	Compact, clear, well organized, some good tables and algorithms
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	Oversimplification; relationship of drugs and severe toxic reactions not explained
<b>Audience:</b>	Interns, 1st-year residents

Khan has attempted a challenging project: to write a book that is small and portable, yet comprehensive in the area of cardiology emergencies. The target audience is the intern or 1st-year resident with little experience in these problems. The book's strengths are the clarity of presentation and the organization of patient-related problems.

The section on physical examination and electrocardiographic analysis is addressed more to a 2nd- or 3rd-year medical student than to an intern or 1st-year resident. If the reader does not have knowledge in both those areas, this section is inadequate. If this section is merely for review, then a much more limited description of physical signs and ECG findings could have been added to each patient problem area.

There are some errors and oversimplifications. For example, it is stated that cough is produced by amiodarone. The more important statement is that cough occurring in a