

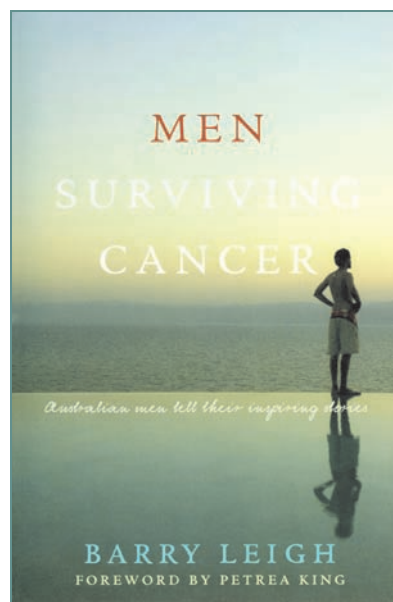
## BOOK REVIEW

# Stories of cancer survival

**Men surviving cancer.** Barry Leigh. Sydney: Jane Curry Publications, 2007 (viii + 255 pp, \$29.95). ISBN 978 1 920727 31 4.

**THIS ACCOUNT OF MEN'S STORIES** provides a lesson in the power of interaction and how what we say as health professionals can change people's perceptions. A single "throw away" statement or sentence can be etched into a patient's mind forever. It can shape the way a person diagnosed with a life-threatening illness views both their prognosis and their future.

Most of the accounts in *Men surviving cancer* are about Australian men who have had above average difficulties. It could be confronting for those who have been recently diagnosed, as the path ahead may seem horrendous. Those in the course of challenging treatment, however, may be encouraged by the ultimate success of such treatment. The accounts in this book, as well as those in numerous other books on the cancer journey, suggest that men experience the same physical, emotional and sociological problems as do women. Men cry too. Men feel isolated



too. Men change their priorities too: focusing on the importance of family, of friends and of nature.

This account of men's experiences may help others in a similar situation recognise that emotions are normal in the abnormal situation of having cancer. These individual inspiring stories help us recognise that fear of death is at the heart of much of our day-to-day anxiety when faced with a cancer diagnosis. Perhaps the title will attract men who would not normally consider reading a book about cancer, and the upbeat nature of the accounts will help them cope better.

As health providers, we can be inspired to communicate more deeply with our patients and appreciate more keenly their willingness to appreciate the power of the spoken word.

**Dawn Hooper**

Clinical Nurse Specialist in Palliative Care,  
Hope Healthcare, Sydney, NSW

**Mark Tweeddale**

Cancer survivor, NSW