

2008 Best Guide to Alternative Cancer Therapies?

review by Jonathan Collin, MD

Cancer Recovery Guide: 15 Alternative and Complementary

Strategies for Restoring Health by Jonathan Chamberlain

Clairview Books, Hillside House, The Square, Forest Road, East Sussex RH18 5ES; www.clairviewbooks.com

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Jonathan Chamberlain is not a physician, and that may be all the better when it comes to writing a guide to alternative cancer therapies. He is a good writer and avoids slathering on the medical jargon that makes most health books arcane or tedious. Most lay folks enter the field of cancer either by getting cancer or taking care of a loved one with cancer, and Chamberlain was no exception. In his case, his wife prematurely developed cancer, and she dutifully attended the medical clinic in London undergoing surgery, radiation treatment, and chemotherapy. She apparently had an aggressive tumor, and none of the treatments effectively abated the progression of the disease. Within a year, she was dead, and Chamberlain was distraught, not only with the outcome of her disease but with the sheer ineffectiveness of the treatment she was offered. Hence, Chamberlain was inspired to explore the cancer field and study its ways.

For a book shorter than 200 pages, with big print, Chamberlain's *Cancer Recovery Guide* packs a lot of discussion on theory and treatment into what may be the best read on alternative therapies for cancer. He previously published a much larger book, *Cancer: The Complete Recovery Guide*, as an e-book (2007, www.fightingcancer.com), which discusses the therapies in much greater depth. Yet the shorter *Cancer Recovery Guide* covers alternative and complementary therapies with enough information to interest readers in the therapies and encourage their use. In just a few pages, Chamberlain offers a great comeback argument for the hardcore health professionals and the cynical journalists who dispute that alternative therapies play any legitimate role in treating cancer. Indeed, the worried and disbelieving family members who attempt to dissuade any participation with alternative medicine would have great difficulty debating Chamberlain's discussion except to offer the same tired quip that, "if the alternative method was good treatment, then your oncologist would be asking you to do it." If we could get the health professional and the worried family member to just read Chamberlain's "basics on cancer," the road to trying alternative therapies will be far easier for the patient.

When I was involved with the Congressional Technology Assessment's group asked to study unconventional cancer therapies in the late 1980s, we were deflated by the researchers' extensive discussion of meditation and visualization as effective alternative therapies compared to using laetrile and vitamin C. Somewhat arrogantly, we thought that we, "the alternative cancer community," were

Sir William Osler is noted for saying: "In today's system of medicine, a patient has to recover twice: once from the disease and once from the treatment."

being blindsided by university biofeedback researchers who were writing tomes on the wonders of relaxation techniques. How could we finally get the privilege of having a Congressional study of unconventional cancer therapies only to have that study seemingly ignore or belittle the great minds of the past century, like Max Gerson, or maverick practitioners, like Donald Kelly? In fact, none of these cancer heroes were ignored, but the study group found tremendous fault with their work compared with the meditation workers who were given nearly impeccable standing. Chamberlain credits the biofeedback community with posing the top four strategies in helping to cure one's cancer. While some cancer clinics offer work on positive mental attitude, Chamberlain observes that most clinics are little more than chemotherapy profit centers with little incentive to get patients on the right track. "Harnessing the Healing Power of the Mind," "Loving and Forgiving Yourself and Others," "Relaxing and Laughing" are the chapter heads for proven therapies that all cancer clinics, orthodox and alternative, should offer at the onset to increase the odds of surviving cancer.

The crème-de-la-crème of the *Cancer Recovery Guide* unquestionably is the discussion of alternative therapies, which range from the use of intravenous vitamin C to Essiac, from alkalizing the body to detoxification strategies, from Budwig's use of flaxseed oil mixed in cottage cheese to PolyMVA, and from Rife Machine frequencies to unapproved use of drugs, including Digitalis and Cimetidine. Chamberlain looks at the therapies that have the most background, like Gerson's diet and colonic enemas, and at the ones that appear to be the least supportable, such as Hulda Clark's contention that all cancers arise from an intestinal fluke and exposure to propyl alcohol from household and cosmetic product use. With a nice index, the patient and the doctor can have a "15-second" read about a medical alternative right at their fingertips.

I am delighted to have found Chamberlain's work in such an easy-to-read form. With patient anecdotes and connections to patients' treatment strategies through their own websites, this book deserves to be placed in the patient library or to be offered for sale from the dispensary. ♦

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