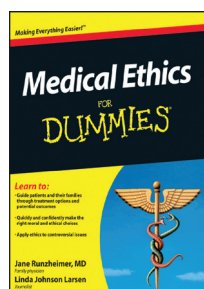


BOOKS

Medical Ethics for Dummies. Jane Runzheimer and Linda Johnson Larsen. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2011, softcover, 368 pages, \$24.99, also available as e-reader.



This novel how-to book written quite plainly and matter-of-factly by a family practice physician and a journalist is extremely relevant. Although not all members of the

healthcare community are fans of a quick fix of scientific matters, this book serves the reader well in giving practical, ethical advice, particularly in the area of bioethics. The presentation of the chapters is simple and easy to navigate, with text-boxes clearly reminding readers of items to note. That type of formatting eases readers as they come to realize that the book can be referred to in times of difficult decision making with ethical dilemmas.

Most practicing healthcare providers have been inundated with coursework in academia and practice surrounding the topic of medical ethics or bioethics. This book is tied closely to those working in the area of oncology, as topical areas and tough ethical issues abound when dealing with patients with cancer and their families navigating terminal disease. Nurses and advanced practice nurses caring for patients with cancer need up-to-date information regarding the legal and ethical aspects of decision making with patients. Academics, nursing professors, medical professors, and leaders in nursing transferring knowledge about ethical decisions in medicine can benefit from this book, as well as those on hospital ethics committees. *Medical Ethics for Dummies* would make an excellent gift for those joining a committee or remaining on one over the years.

Although medical ethics seems easy at first glance, doing the right thing is really quite difficult in modern times. Outside influences, including third-party payers, hospitals, nonprofits, and pharmaceutical companies, affect how medical practice is conducted. Although medical ethics should be the “underpinning of prac-

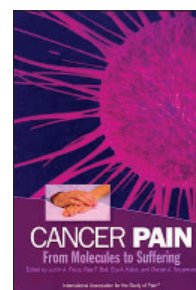
tice,” as stated by the authors, that is not always the case. Medical malpractice costs, identity theft, electronic medical records, and pay-for-performance reimbursement cloud the atmosphere of any modern-day medical practice. Compliance with the confidentiality laws set up by the federal government and the restrictions placed on physicians and mid-level providers regarding what diagnostic procedures and surgeries will be paid for all contribute to a complex healthcare environment. Medical practices handle a myriad of ethical dilemmas that are routine issues for most caregivers.

The book gives very practical advice on making ethical decisions, showing practitioners how to ensure access for all patients, avoid discrimination for the medically fragile, evaluate outcomes in a practice, and avoid legally challenging and costly situations. Healthcare providers must consider how to manage teenagers requesting treatments without parental consent, mother and infant ethical decisions, confidential diagnoses, advanced directives, and resuscitation issues. Healthcare providers are subject to scrutiny for every decision they make, from the handling of charts and records to the dying wishes of patients. Clinical trials, physician-assisted suicide, genetic testing, abortion, end of life-sustaining treatments, and cloning all are included in the book. Finally, the most useful chapter covers the top 10 ethical issues today and delineates potential future ethical problems. *Medical Ethics for Dummies* should be recommended for oncology nurses at any level.

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Cancer Pain: From Molecules to Suffering. Judith Paice*, Rae Bell, Eija Kalso, and Olaitan Soyunwo (Eds.). Seattle, WA: International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) Press, 2010, paperback, 345 pages, \$75 (IASP members, \$60).

Cancer pain is a complex phenomenon that is difficult to study and treat. A publication that provides evidence-based information about its mechanisms and treatment is



essential for oncology healthcare professionals. *Cancer Pain: From Molecules to Suffering* fits the bill. It addresses important aspects of cancer pain relevant to basic and clinical scientists working

in the field, as well as for healthcare providers caring for patients with cancer pain. Based on presentations from a research symposium sponsored by IASP, the book's purpose is to disseminate the most current research related to cancer pain.

The book's 20 chapters are written by international experts in the field of cancer pain and provide the reader with cutting-edge information on cancer pain, including its basic mechanisms, treatment, clinical trial methodologic issues, and psychological issues for patients. Each chapter addresses current work along with clinical implications and research needed in the future. The book's strength is its global perspective on cancer pain. That focus is unique compared to other books on cancer pain that focus primarily on its clinical management.

Although *Cancer Pain* is directed to a variety of professionals interested in cancer pain, nurses will find this book helpful in the study and management of symptoms and treatment of side effects. The book is not intended to be a cancer pain reference for the clinical setting; however, its chapters provide information in a concise, easy-to-read manner, with a balance of basic and clinical research findings. Clinicians caring for patients with cancer pain may find two tables particularly helpful: the first identifies possible causes of pain in patients with cancer and the second provides current drug therapies for cancer pain treatment. The book's technical quality is excellent, with graphics that enhance the text by providing visuals for complex information.

Cancer Pain is an important cancer pain resource for any healthcare professional interested in up-to-date, evidence-based information on cancer pain. Its

*Oncology Nursing Society member