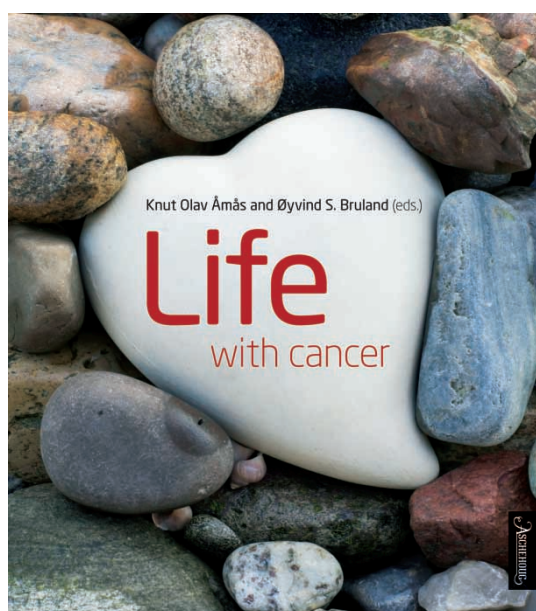


BOOK REVIEW

Life with cancer

Knut Olav Åmås & Øyvind Bruland, editors
Aschehough & Co, Oslo, Norway, 2008
288 pages
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The Norwegian Radium Hospital in Oslo is one of the leading cancer centers in Scandinavia. Its 75th anniversary in 2007 inspired Professor Øyvind Bruland to *Life with Cancer*, which has now been translated into English in order to reach readers abroad. Physicians, researchers, journalists, lecturers and patients have contributed within different areas of this book. The content bridges from the basis of cancer development to encounters with those affected. It sheds light and insight into the many aspects of a disease that will affect one of three individuals in the western world and links professional knowledge with patient experiences.

The collaborative effort between professionals and patients in the writing of this book exemplifies how

cancer can be described and understood from different perspectives. Is it indicative, perhaps, that the photos from the Norwegian Radium Hospital show humans rather than buildings whether they present novel radiation therapy equipment or hospital facilities? The mind set is focused forwards rather than backwards. It seems, in this regard, that the Norwegian Radium Hospital's ambition to find balance between preservation and change is successful. Even in the most difficult of times, laughter is there. Just look at the pictures from the Radium Hospital's wig saloon. Should I get myself a traditionally cut wig or a new age blue one (p. 269)? Either of them would go with a new hat for the summer season – that would help me feel better (p. 275). Lacking perhaps is a more detailed glimpse into cancer treatment in 75 years. It would be interesting to share the views of the physicians and researchers in this regard. Individualized and targeted treatments are discussed, but will they really make a difference – and if so how and in which areas?

From the first pages onwards the book contains talented and intricate photos, through which the reader meets with the individual behind the story and shares experiences through quotes on many of the pictures. The photos also tell their own story. They create an ambiance that encompasses the many aspects of cancer – from the basic facts and the grim reality of cancer to the love and honour of those who lost their fight and the growing hopes for cancer survival. Sharing these different perspectives is challenging and rewarding – for patients, friends and relatives, health care personnel, and researchers alike. This book provides new insights into the chaos and confidence of cancer patients. The clear, modest and insightful thoughts evoke reflection, which in the long run, is perhaps the most important contribution by *Life with cancer*.

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