

## Problem Solving in Older Cancer Patients

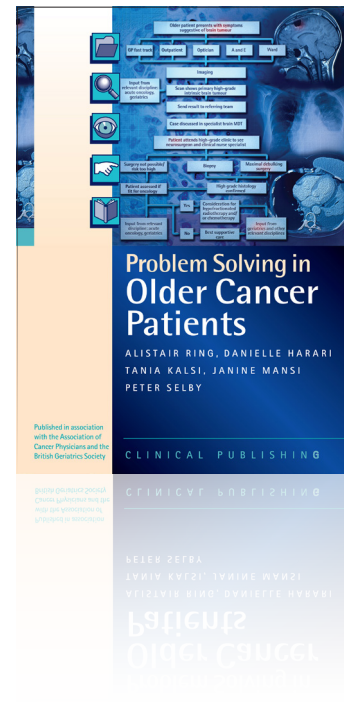
**Alistair Ring, Danielle Harari, Tania Kalsi, Janine Mansi, Peter Selby**  
**Clinical Publishing 2015**  
**Price £39.95. Pp 328**  
**ISBN 978 1 84692 110 0**

This is a well-structured and easy to read clinical handbook which aims to provide an overview of the challenges in this highly relevant aspect of modern clinical medicine. It clearly outlines current and projected issues in managing older patients with cancer. The integrated approach draws upon the wealth of expertise from oncology, elderly medicine, palliative care and others to provide a coherent and detailed overview of the management of older cancer patients.

The case vignettes are a highly effective means of contextualising the unique clinical issues facing older patients with cancer. It allows the reader to work through a 'real-life' case scenario and highlights key practice points. It encourages the reader to

try to develop their management strategy in a coherent and systematic way taking into account the wide-ranging issues facing this complex patient group. The problems are worked out, supported by current evidence, and the process of clinical reasoning is discussed to develop the optimum management plan. Summary points help crystallise key learning objectives.

More experienced clinicians will benefit from the distilled evidence base and recognize the challenges highlighted in the cases to reflect on and refine their approach to managing these patients. The training clinician will value the insight into the complex decision making and clinical reasoning involved in the care of these patients. This book will be very useful for any clinician who cares for older cancer patients and is a worthwhile investment.  
*Ganesh Radhakrishna, St James' Institute of Oncology, Leeds*



## Universal Healthcare Without the NHS: Towards a Patient-centred Health System

**Kristian Niemetz**  
**Institute of Economic Affairs 2016**  
**Price £10.00. Pp 152**  
**ISBN 978 0 255 36737 0**

The premise of this book is that the NHS is sacred and thus beyond criticism or reasoned debate. The author critiques the NHS, an 'international laggard', in the context of its global peers. However, the book is not as controversial as the author might hope.

I most enjoyed chapter 3, which gives a history of the various, largely unsuccessful, NHS reforms, e.g. the internal market, private finance initiatives and clinical commissioning. The book also highlights a lack of policy continuity, slowing of NHS spending and the importance of universality of health-care coverage. I was surprised at how poorly the NHS performs relative to its European peers in select conditions, although the studies used were chosen to demonstrate a point. The author acknowledges that the nuances behind health outcome measures, e.g. avoidable mortality, need consideration but tells us nothing about why those differences exist.

There is some contradiction: if 'outside of wars, revolutions or collapse of a regime, there are hardly any examples of countries abolishing a health system and replacing it with another' why does the author wonder why the world refused to copy the NHS.

The author argues that we should move to a social health insurance-based system, but there is no guarantee that this leads to better outcomes in other countries. I would recommend this book for those seeking an alternative perspective on the NHS.  
*David Warriner, NHS England and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, London*

## Gastrointestinal Bleeding: A Practical Approach to Diagnosis and Management

**Edited by Aurora D Pryor, Theodore N Pappas, M Stanley Branch**  
**Springer 2016**  
**Price £66.99. Pp 224**  
**ISBN 978 3 319 40644 2**

This is a relatively slim volume edited by two surgeons from Stony Brook Hospital and Duke Medical Center, and one gastroenterologist also from Duke. The book sets out to pursue a practical approach to diagnosis and management,

concentrating on the 'latest innovations in endoluminal and minimally invasive techniques'. There are 19 chapters covering the various sources of gastrointestinal bleeding. The material is well referenced and up to date.

Unfortunately there are significant issues with content. In the section on upper gastrointestinal bleeds there is little on risks of bleeding with various drugs and nothing on relative risk of bleeding with anticoagulants. The management of TIPPS is discussed before explanation of what it is. There is a need for figures rather than endless oceans of text. In the chapters on lower gastrointestinal bleeding there is almost nothing on post-polypectomy bleeds and no advice about practical points. On a general level the images are poor.

The overall impression is that many of the chapters are written as a result of competent literature reviews, possibly by clinical fellows who have not seen a large number of the conditions discussed. This book succeeds as a review of the available literature but does not achieve the goal of a guide to practical management of these very challenging patients.  
*Stuart Bloom, UCL Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, London*