

Dr. Goldman's Book Reviews

KNOCKOUT

Interviews with Doctors who are Curing Cancer and
How to Prevent Getting It in the First Place

By

Suzanne Somers

Crown Publishers, 2009

Once again, Suzanne Somers is at the center of a firestorm. I am sure she began writing this book long before the recent guidelines changes for mammograms and Pap smears, but its release is just in time. In these days of congressional debates about healthcare reform, Suzanne Somers enters the fray with a controversial book about cancer therapy in America. Cancer diagnosis and therapy is a huge business, amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars a year. There are major vested interests in keeping the current standards and approaches from changing. In her relentless search for health and vitality, Ms. Somers seeks out doctors with novel approaches to medical care. This time, her attention is on cancer.

As in her previous books, Knockout consists mostly of a series of interviews with various medical practitioners on their views of cancer and how it is treated and how they think it should be treated.

In the first section of the book, Somers recounts a truly frightening experience she had recently with the regular, allopathic medical community. From there, she lays out the problems she sees with current cancer therapy. I have spoken with other doctors after reading her accounts, including cancer chemotherapy physicians. They confirm the basic very poor performance of chemotherapy on many cancers, including the common breast cancers. Yet, large numbers of patients, hundreds of thousands a year in the U. S., receive expensive courses of chemotherapy, frequently suffering major side effects, with very little benefit, if any. This issue is virtually unknown to the public and is ignored by doctors.

In the Second section, Somers interviews four doctors with novel cancer treatment protocols. Prior to reading Knockout, I had never heard of any of these doctors, nor had I heard of their treatments. I don't know if any of these therapies work, or if they do, what their success and failure rates are, but I feel it is important for a fair assessment of these doctors and their therapies to be done. At the least, these approaches are less expensive and cause less harm to the patient, than most current cancer care.

The final section of the book deals with prevention. She interviews eight practitioners and gets their views on maintaining health and preventing cancer. I must say that I get

upset every time I see a Georgia “Fight Breast Cancer” license plate. Currently, the main stream medical community treats cancer treatment as a war. As in most wars, there are casualties and collateral damage. “Lovingly caring for women’s breasts” or “maintaining healthy bodies free of cancer” would be far more noble goals. Many people suffer more from the treatments they receive than they would have if their cancers had remained undetected. This is especially true of many non-aggressive breast and prostate cancers.

As with Suzanne Somers other books, there are things I agree with, others I disagree with and lots of areas I just don’t know enough about to assess the truth. There is a huge amount of material here and the reader can try to carry out their own research. What it without question is that Suzanne Somers deals with issues of major importance for the women and men of America. I applaud her energy and her willingness to stick her neck out for causes she believes in. I hope that Knockout will start a wider and deeper discussion of cancer diagnosis, treatment and prevention in the United States and around the world.

Robert P. Goldman, M.D. December 2009