Background

The symptoms of cancer and side-effects of its treatment can make eating a challenge. These side-effects, alongside cancer-related metabolic changes, can lead to malnutrition¹. Maintaining health and nutritional status is therefore vitally important during treatment. However, there is little dietitian-approved information available that supports the cancer patient to cope with the side-effects as well as maintaining a healthy diet².

In an attempt to bridge this gap World Cancer Research Fund UK worked with the British Dietetic Association’s Oncology Specialist Group (OSG) to create this new resource.

Aim: To produce a booklet containing advice and recipes to help cancer patients cope with the diet-related symptoms and side-effects of treatment, whilst maintaining a diet that is as healthy as possible.

Method

The booklet was produced using World Cancer Research Fund UK’s robust, Information Standard-approved information production procedures and included the following key steps:

1. Suitable sources of reference were identified and approved by the OSG.
2. A first draft was written by World Cancer Research Fund, and reviewed by the OSG who provided vital contribution.
3. The copy was sent to members of the public who had been diagnosed with cancer and undergone cancer treatment for comment.
4. Several rounds of approval followed before being finalised and endorsed by all.

“At the time when I was diagnosed and going through treatment, the dietary advice I was given was confusing.”

Cancer survivor

Discussion

World Cancer Research Fund is the world leading authority on diet, nutrition and cancer prevention promoting a set of evidence-based and stringently peer-reviewed Cancer Prevention Recommendations (CPRs), including the recommendation to those who have received a cancer diagnosis (cancer survivors) to follow our other CPRs where possible.

The BDA’s OSG equally champions authoritative information whilst also having valuable patient insight, specifically, in this case, with those experiencing the side-effects of cancer and cancer treatment. Through partnership working, the group was able to bring together their respective insights and expertise to create and champion a unique resource that successfully bridged the gap in patient-focused yet nutritionally-sound health information.

References


Conclusion: Eat Well During Cancer is a popular health information resource, built by the partnership between World Cancer Research Fund and OSG, successfully balancing the patients need to cope with common cancer side-effects and still be nutritionally-sound.