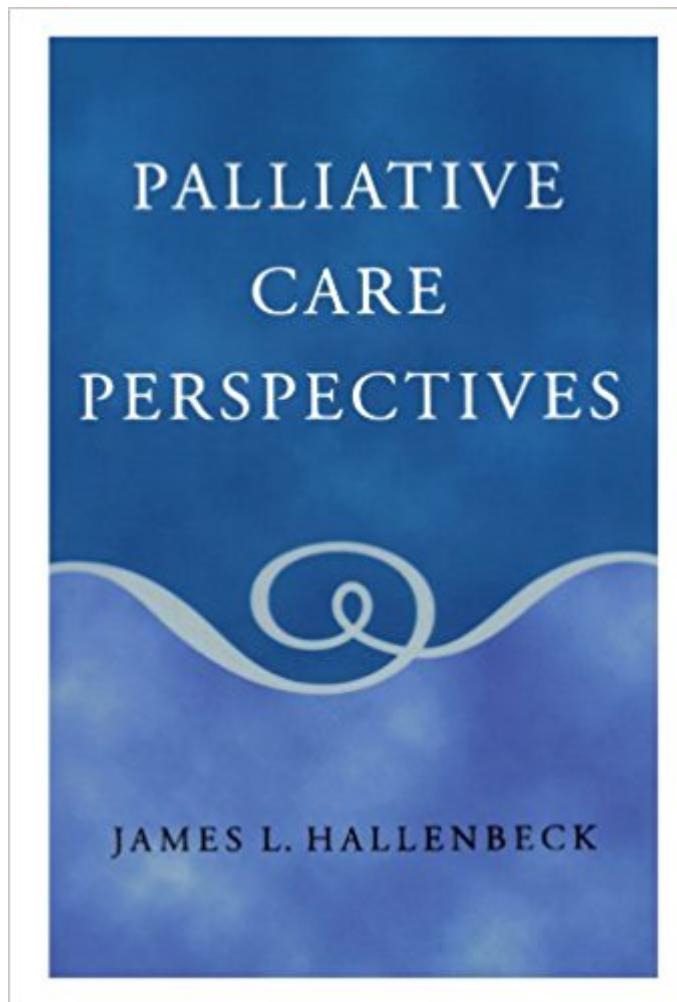


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Palliative Care Perspectives



Synopsis

Drawing from his extensive clinical experience and many years of teaching, Dr. Hallenbeck has written a guide to palliative care for clinicians. Topics addressed range from an overview of death and dying to specific approaches to symptom management. As an introduction to both the art and science of palliative care, this book reflects the perspectives of one physician who has dedicated his career to this rapidly evolving field. The book links real stories of illness with practical advice, thereby delineating clinical practice in a way that reflects the daily concerns of clinicians.

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Customer Reviews

"Although brief in length, this compassionate guide to core topics in palliative care presents an abundance of useful material that will be appreciated by both physicians and non-physicians...Written with the finely tuned phrasing of a poet who can capture the most complicated and multilayered concepts in the briefest of sentences...'There is a time in this process when words do no justice, I think of this as the "sacred silence." This silence opens a space in which the living join the dead, together in the mystery of life and death, becoming and unbecoming.'(p.186)"--Elizabeth Balsam Hart, M.D., Maine-Dartmouth Family Practice Residency Journal of Palliative Medicine

James L. Hallenbeck is at Stanford University School of Medicine.

This is a compassionate, approachable discussion of the branch of medicine focussed on treating dying patients, making them more comfortable as they near the end of life, rather than on trying to treat their illnesses in the hope of a cure. It is written for medical professionals, but I am not a medical professional, and I found it very informative. The first section discusses the way in which the development of modern medicine has changed the profession's approach to treating the dying: much of the change has been positive, but some of it has actually made things much harder for the dying and for those who love them. The author then discusses the growth of the hospice movement, and the development of palliative care as a speciality within that movement. Then, he discusses the issue of determining how long someone is likely to live, a critical issue in deciding -- and in helping them decide -- how they should be cared for. Then he moves on to question of symptom management, stressing that what matters here is how the patient experiences the symptoms, and what that patient wants out of treatment. The next section, on pain management, contains a lot of very specific medical information, but laypeople who are caring for dying loved ones often become (and need to become) surprisingly expert in these matters. This section may be somewhat out of date, but it will at least suggest questions to ask. The next section covers management of non-pain symptoms, and the balance of the book discusses broader issues involved in palliative care. Throughout the book, the focus is patients' needs. The author's approach is humane, open-minded, and oriented to effective results. Dr. Hallenbeck clearly believes that listening is a key skill, and has as clearly listened carefully to his patients, and learned a great deal from them. That orientation has a lot to do with making this book a positive one to read, as well as a source of a great deal of useful information. From other reviews, it seems that medical professionals find it very useful. So too did this non-professional -- so much so, that it will affect the choices I make when I am next responsible for the care of a dear one who is dying, and when my own time comes.

Reading this book is like having Dr. Hallenbeck at your side coaching the reader to think critically about the evolving discipline of palliative care. Dr. Hallenbeck's voice is compassionate, articulate and strong throughout the book. I have placed *Palliative Care Perspectives* alongside some of my other references as I struggle to learn to care for patients at the end of life. I highly recommend this book to careproviders (physicians, nurses, PAs, nurse practitioners, socialworkers, chaplains etc) who have patients who are near the end of their lives. I have met Dr Hallenbeck and been privileged to work with him; if you are unable to work with him or to hear him speak, this treatise is like having him at your elbow when you need help. It is an intimate and thoughtful book that should be required reading for professionals in training.

Excellent!!! All that I need for Hospice Care.

This is a beautifully written summary of the essentials with lots of clinical vignettes and practical tips by an experienced and obviously dedicated clinician.

As my friend was dying of metastasized soft tissue sarcoma, I ordered this book to be better prepared for the hospice experience and his certain death. This book was just unbelievably helpful. Dr. Hallenbeck is to be congratulated for so clearly explaining and championing this increasingly important specialty - palliative care.

This book is spectacular. It covers all of the major points in palliative care giving the reader very practical and useful information. The chapters on non-pain symptom management and communication are fabulous. I just can't say enough good things about this book. It is an excellent overview for students, residents and even beginning palliative care fellows.

This remains one of the most valuable books I know of on the topic of palliative care. Hallenbeck's sensitive and insightful exploration of the issues remains on-target and relevant. You can look elsewhere for the latest on which drugs have been tested for what, but for a comprehensive review of the field that will leave you inspired and motivated to make meaningful changes in medical practices, this book should be close at hand.

Dr. Hallenbeck's book should be part of your core library if you have any interest in Palliative Care. Not only have I found it an excellent clinical reference, I've found it an accessible, easily readable entree to the subtleties of good palliative care practice. Highly recommended reading for all disciplines.

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