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Book Review

McGuckin M.

The Patient Survival Guide: 8 Simple Solutions to Prevent Hospital- and Healthcare-Associated Infection

New York, NY: Demos Health; 2012.

In *The Patient Survival Guide: 8 Simple Solutions to Prevent Hospital-and Healthcare-Associated Infections*, Dr. Maryanne McGuckin educates and empowers the average person to take control of their healthcare. Dr. McGuckin is founder and president of McGuckin Methods International, Inc. (MMI), an advisory company that promotes patient empowerment, hand hygiene, and consumer education. The possibility of acquiring a healthcare-associated infection can be extremely frightening, and in this book, Dr. McGuckin educates the reader on how to prevent these all-too-common occurrences. Among the 8 simple solutions are: knowing the signs of a healthcare-associated infection; understanding what daily care you should be receiving; and the questions you should definitely be asking.

Written for the general public, this book offers insight as to how and why infections are acquired in healthcare settings, primarily hospitals. The four most prevalent healthcare-associated infections are: urinary tract infections, respiratory infections, surgery site infections, and bloodstream infections. In an easy-to-read manner, McGuckin describes the microbiology of how these infections are spread and the effects that they have on the body. The recurrent message in this book, mentioned at least once in each chapter, is for people to simply wash their hands. Handwashing is imperative for anyone that enters a patient's room.

McGuckin stresses the importance of the patient being in total control of his/her healthcare experience. In the chapter entitled, "Power to the Patient," McGuckin supplies readers with useful tips to assert control over the healthcare they receive using the "3 Cs" – *commitment*, *continuity*, and *communication*. This chapter also explains what patients should know before signing consent forms and the value of enlisting the help of an advocate.

McGuckin uses stories in an attempt to connect with and educate her readers. One story that was especially heart wrenching was the story of Julie Rich. Julie's mother was a healthy sixty-five year old woman who went to the hospital for an elective same-day surgery to insert a bladder sling. Once home it seemed as the catheter was not working properly and Julie and her mother returned to the doctor's office. It was discovered that the catheter had been placed upside down inside the body. The nurse at the doctor's office fixed it and sent Julie's mother home. Within the next few days Julie's mother developed a fever and once again returned to the doctor's office. The doctor then admitted to the family that Julie's mother had developed a "Staph" *(Staphylococcus aureus)* infection which then developed into sepsis, the sling had become infected and needed to be removed. After two more surgeries Julie's mother went to stay in a nursing home. When she was finally able to go to her own home Julie's mother was still heavily relying on medication and the use of an oxygen tank. Through Julie's story the reader realizes that a medical error from an elective surgery could result in such pain and suffering.

The Patient Survival Guide provides useful information that is readily accessible for lay people, and would be especially useful for those preparing for surgery or other medical procedure. The author's knowledge and passion for the subject comes through, making this book a fast, easy read. ■

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