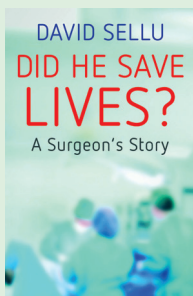


4. Shapiro CL. Cancer Survivorship. *N Engl J Med* 2018;379:2438–50.
5. Ng AK, Kenney LB, Gilbert ES, Travis LB. Secondary malignancies across the age spectrum. *Semin Radiat Oncol* 2010;20(1):67–78.
6. National Cancer Patient Experience Survey (www.ncpes.co.uk; accessed 17 June 2019).
7. Burgess C, Cornelius V, Love S, *et al*. Depression and anxiety in women with early breast cancer: five year observational cohort study. *BMJ* 2005;330:702.
8. Macmillan Cancer Support. *Making the shift. Providing specialist work support to people with cancer*. London: Macmillan Cancer Support, 2013.
9. Casellas-Grau A, Font A, Vives J. Positive psychology interventions in breast cancer. A systematic review. *Psychooncology* 2014;23(1):9–19.
10. Watts E. Self help groups: a personal and professional view. *Eur J Cancer* 2000; 36:1–5.
11. Macmillan Cancer Support. Recovery package resources (www.macmillan.org.uk/about-us/health-professionals/programmes-and-services/recovery-package/resources.html#297774; accessed 17 June 2019).
12. Watson M, Haviland JS, Greer S, *et al*. Influence of psychological response on survival in breast cancer: a population-based cohort study. *Lancet* 1999;354:1331–6.
13. Cancer Research UK. Cancer Strategy in England (<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-us/cancer-strategy-in-england>; accessed 2 July 2019).

Book review



Did he save lives? A surgeon's story

David Sellu. Sweetcroft Publishing, July 2019, £9.99, ISBN: 9781912892327

This fascinating, if sometimes harrowing, highly personal account should be required reading for all those who have an interest in patient safety. It tracks the journey of David Sellu from an impoverished childhood in Sierra Leone, to a successful and unblemished career as a colorectal surgeon in London, that was interrupted by his conviction and prison sentence for gross negligence manslaughter.

In his recently published book, Sellu describes his prosecution over the case of Mr Jim Hughes, who died from peritonitis as a result of a perforation of a diverticular abscess, following a total knee replacement five days earlier – a scenario that is known to carry around a 30% chance of mortality, with any treatment. However, the expert witness Mr Michael Kelly asserted in court that with more expeditious surgery the chance of mortality would have only been 2.6%, and that the delay in operating amounted to gross negligence that led directly to the patient's death. As a consequence, David Sellu was sentenced to two and a half years incarceration.

David's vivid and meticulous description of his experiences in Bellmarsh, Highpoint South and eventually Hollesley Bay prison provide a unique insight into the life of a doctor behind bars. It makes exceedingly uncomfortable reading for

clinicians who know that their patients' lives are in their hands and that their own best efforts could easily be construed by another clinician as inadequate and consequently 'grossly negligent'. This is the underlying reason why this case created shockwaves within the Royal College of Surgeons of England, The General Medical Council (GMC) and the Crown Prosecution Service, and why Sellu's conviction was eventually quashed, and his name restored to the medical directory, with all conditions removed. The unstinting support of Dr Jenny Vaughan, who galvanised her colleagues, is acknowledged.

If any good at all is to stem from this sad and sorry tale, then the recommendations from the report specially commissioned by the GMC need to be taken on urgently. It concludes that coroners need to be more consistent in their decisions to refer cases to the police, and the CPS should take specialist advice before proceeding to prosecute a doctor for gross negligence manslaughter, and that so-called 'system errors', should be taken into serious consideration, in relation to any individual clinician's mistake.

If Sellu's truly excellent book hastens the introduction of these very necessary changes he may not have suffered in vain.

Roger Kirby