Book Reviews

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Cancer Therapy

Peter Bannasch, ed.
Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong
Springer-Verlag, 1989, 256 pp.
ISBN: 3-540-51034-6
DM 58. Softcover

This is the proceedings of a conference held in Heidelberg in July 1988 on new trends in cancer therapy. It includes contributions from 20 authors under 8 different sessions, namely Surgery (incl. photodynamic therapy, and stereotactic radiosurgery), Radiation (incl. heavy particles, fractionation, and IOR), Hyperthermia, Chemotherapy (incl. new agents, and drug resistance), Biological Response (incl. biological response modifiers; theory and clinic, and predictive assays of tumor therapy), Bone Marrow Transplantation, Antibody Guided Therapy, and Cell Differentiation and Growth. The book is recommended for those who want a relatively detailed update on some important new development lines in cancer therapy. The illustrations are excellent.

TORSTEN LANDBERG

Breast Cancer. Conservative and Reconstructive Surgery

HH Bohmert, HP Leis Jr and IT Jackson, eds.
Georg Thieme Verlag Stuttgart–New York, 1989, 534 pp.
ISBN: 3-13-727101-0
DM 198, approx. price

The book has 67 chapters by 129 authors, most of which are from Europe. Biology of breast cancer is dealt with in 20 pages, breast conserving treatment in 85 pages, adjuvant treatment in 20 pages, treatment after local recurrence in 20 pages, psychological aspects in 13 pages while the remaining 370 pages are devoted to various aspects of breast reconstruction. This field is well covered. The text is illustrated with numerous photos and drawings, making the text easy to follow. The book can be recommended to plastic surgeons interested in breast cancer problems and to general surgeons interested in breast reconstruction.

KNUT ASPEGREN

Breast Cancer

B. Hoogstraten, I Burn, H. Bloom, G Julian, eds.
Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong
Springer-Verlag, 1989, 287 pp.
ISBN: 3-540-50595-4
DM 148. Softcover

This is an excellent review on current clinical and biological knowledge in the breast cancer area. The book contains chapters by leading experts on etiology and epidemiology, pathology, screening, hormone physiology, psychology and curative and adjuvant therapy in all stages of the disease. All chapters are well written and up to date but too much emphasis seems to have been put on techniques and results in radical or superradical surgery as compared to the small number of pages given to limited breast surgery. This is an old controversy indeed, but the length of the chapters on these subjects does not reflect the dominating development in recent years towards more limited surgery even in node positive patients.

The tremendous increase in knowledge of tumor biology in the last decade has made breast cancer a complicated and stimulating subject. The book therefore is of interest not only to the expert surgeon or oncologist but to many others as well. The book is a must in every general surgical and oncology departments library.

LARS BERGLJUNG

Drug Delivery in Cancer Treatment II—Symptom Control, Cytokines, Chemotherapy (ESO Monographs, Veronesi U, ed.)

L. Domellöf, ed.
Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong
Springer-Verlag, 1989, 107 pp.
ISBN: 3-540-51055-9 Springer-Verlag Berlin, Heidelberg, New York
ISBN: 0-387-51055-9 Springer-Verlag New York, Berlin, Heidelberg
DM 136

One of the more recent activities of the European School of Oncology has been the institution of permanent study groups—or task forces—where a limited number of leading experts are invited once a year with the aim of defining the state-of-the-art and possibly reaching a consensus on future developments in specific fields of oncology. The ESO Monograph Series was designed with the specific purpose of disseminating the results of the meetings of these study groups and provide consensus and updated reviews of the topics discussed.

This book is the second on drug delivery in the above mentioned monograph series, the first being published in 1987. Does this book then fulfil the goals set by the scientific committee of ESO? Scarcely, in my opinion. The booklet contains 7 chapters with a somewhat heterogeneous panorama of topics, ranging from 'Immunotherapy and interaction of cytokines in the host' to 'Drug delivery to cancer patients in home care'. In general, all chapters are of a high standard, but vary greatly in length from 5 to 24 pages. Of special value are the chapters on 'Chemoembolisation in regional chemotherapy' and the chapter on 'How to optimise treatment modalities for hypoxic tumor cells'; these contributions are critical and bring the reader up-to-date on areas which rarely are covered in depth in the rapidly expanding literature on clinical oncology. Also, the chapter on 'Pharmacokinetic aspects of drug-drug and drug-plast interactions with anticancer drugs' is worthwhile reading for the clinical oncologist. Otherwise, the book is characterized by its heterogeneity and it is difficult to visualize the clinicians this booklet specifically aims at.

Since the book intends to cover the information from a task force meeting, it would have been desirable in addition to the chapters by individual participants also to be informed about the substance of the discussions from the meeting, especially whether consensus was achieved on any of the issues discussed.

HEINE H. HANSEN

Radiological safety aspects of the operation of proton accelerators
Technical Report Series, No. 283.

IAEA, Vienna, ed.
International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna, 1988, 473 pp.
ISBN: 92-0-125188-2
ATS 1.020

The report has seven chapters: (a) Characteristics of positive ion accelerators, (b) Radiation environment of positive ion accelerators, (c) Radiation measurements at accelerators, (d) Radiation shielding, (e) Accelerator radiation safety programme, (f) Radiological environmental impact of accelerators, and (g) Sources of information and bibliography on accelerator radiation protection. There is a broad coverage of the topic with due attention to history. The reader is referred to references for details. There is no subject index.

BO JUNG

Gastrointestinal Cancer. Radiation Therapy

R. Dobelbower Jr, ed.
Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong
Springer-Verlag, 1990, 301 pp.
ISBN 3-540-50505-9
DM 220

This book contains an extensive review of several aspects related to radiation therapy of gastrointestinal cancer. In addition to the chapters on the different tumour sites there are separate chapters dealing with tumorigenesis, tumour markers, pathology of gastrointestinal cancer, radiological examination of patients with gastrointestinal cancer, the medical management of gastrointestinal cancer and follow-up of patients treated for gastrointestinal cancer. Several of these chapters as well as most of the chapters dealing with the different tumour sites are very well written and informative. Each chapter dealing with the special tumour sites also has a short introduction dealing with the pathology and radiology of that particular site. There is no separate chapter dealing with radiation therapy of liver cancer, although that item is dealt with in the pathology and chemotherapy sections. The chapter on follow-up is brief but contains detailed advice on the subjects. This chapter is, however, uncritically written and there is no discussion of the value of the recommendations. Most of the chapters deal with recent information which makes the book seem 'up to date'. This, however, is not always true, and particularly not of the chapter about anal carcinoma which contains very few references from 1986 and none from later years. I looked in vain for a basic chapter about radiation therapy principles and about the most recent aspects of fractionation and radiobiology.

BENGT GLIMELIUS

Good Clinical Trials Practice, Nordic Guidelines (NLN Publication No. 28)

E. Jacobsen, K. Aranko, J. Idänpään-Heikkilä, B. Feiring, K. Strandberg, S. Westman-Naeser, U. Janzon, eds.
Nordic Council on Medicines. P.O. Box 607, S-751 25 Uppsala, Sweden. 1989, 40 pp.
ISBN: 91-86432-27-3

These guidelines of good clinical trial practice are presented with the aim of making professionals, investigators in particular, involved in the planning, conduct, analysis and assessment of clinical trials aware of what is to be expected of a high quality clinical trial by e.g. drug regulatory authorities and scientific journals. The objectives are to help safeguard the interest of patients, investigators, sponsors and society in ensuring that only adequately planned and conducted clinical trials are performed. The different aspects of a clinical trial are discussed in detail, and standard operating procedures are suggested to ensure quality assessment.

Although these guidelines deal mainly with testing of drugs in trials that will be part of a submission for marketing authorisation, the basic set of recommendations pertains to all clinical trials. It is thus an important document that all oncologists involved in clinical trials should be familiar with.

TORGIL R. MÖLLER

Risks from Radium and Thorotrast

DM Taylor, CW Mays, GB Gerber, RG Thomas, eds.
British Institute of Radiology Report 21, London, 1989, 188 pp.
ISBN: 0-905749-22-7
GBL 40

This proceedings volume contains the most recent follow-up studies of 1) patients given the x-ray contrast agent Thorotrast (colloidal ThO_2) for angiography, 2) patients treated with radium-224 for bone tuberculosis or ankylosing spondylitis and 3) workers exposed to radium-226 when painting luminous watch and aircraft instrument dials. People in all three of these groups have suffered serious ill effects, especially the development of bone cancer from the radium isotopes and liver cancer from Thorotrast. The follow-up of these tragic events of medical and industrial practice has given us unique information on the effects on man of incorporated alpha-emitting radionuclides and of high-LET radiation. The importance of these studies is today even greater than before, as the recent dosimetry reassessment for the A-bomb survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki indicates that the neutron exposures are substantially lower than earlier calculations and thus have had little influence on risk estimates.

The volume consists of more than 30 papers, the last being a very interesting contribution by A Upton stressing the possibility of a 'reverse dose rate effect' or 'protraction enhancement effect' after high LET-radiation. The volume provides us with updated information on cancer risks from incorporated alpha emitters. It also draws our attention to various non-stochastic effects arising in these populations. Finally, it discusses the results of animal studies which greatly extend our understanding of the mechanisms underlying the induction of cancer and other diseases by high-LET radiation.

This book is recommended for specialists in radiation biology, radiation protection and risk assessment and for those interested in the fundamental mechanisms of the induction of cancer.

SÖREN MATTSSON