

FUNCTIONAL FOOD & NUTRACEUTICALS IN CANCER PREVENTION

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Interest in and use of complementary medicines that includes functional foods and nutraceuticals is expanding dramatically across the globe. This book is therefore a welcome addition to the increasing number aimed at disseminating a balanced view of current knowledge in this area. The specific aim of this book is to convey up to date information regarding the usefulness of dietary plants and nutritional supplements for cancer prevention to interested lay readers in addition to researchers and workers in the nutrition, food science and natural products communities. It generally succeeds in this aim although the level at which it is written would frequently demand a dedicated and well informed lay reader, with some chapters requiring a reasonable scientific grounding. As a reference piece for researchers in complementary medicine it is extremely valuable in presenting a well balanced perspective on the potential benefits of functional foods and nutraceuticals for cancer prevention, while clearly defining the limitations of current research.

The book comprises sixteen chapters divided into two parts, Part I titled "Approaches to Cancer Prevention: Role of Nutrition" and Part II titled "Fruits, Vegetables, and Herbs in Cancer Prevention". Throughout the book there is a fair amount of duplication of topic areas, for example the topic of soy-derived isoflavones for breast cancer is addressed in at least three separate chapters. Having said this it is often helpful in reinforcing concepts to have them presented in a slightly

different manner more than once. There are a number of relatively minor errors and omissions throughout. Firstly a glossary of terms is a must for a book such as this and the title words "functional foods" and "nutraceuticals" should have been defined at the outset. While the 35 contributing authors together provide an excellent and well rounded perspective on the topics addressed there is a lack of editorial rigour demonstrated by the inconsistency in referencing systems employed in the various chapters. In addition there are a number of important typographical errors such as the reference to the "potential carcinogenic activity of chlorophyll" when clearly the author intended "anti-carcinogenic activity". The writing style in some chapters also differs from that employed in the bulk of the text, an almost inevitable consequence of the large number of contributors.

On the whole there are many extremely useful tables showing recommendations for appropriate food intakes and biological activities in various foods and food components and the figures are generally easy to follow. A number of important points are frequently highlighted throughout this book. Firstly the difficulty involved in attempting to extrapolate *in vitro* and animal model research to the human situation and secondly the complex interactions and synergies that are inherent in nutraceuticals and whole functional foods that can result in the failure of simple extracts to demonstrate expected benefits.

Overall this book is an extremely useful reference, competently describing the current *in vitro*, *in vivo* and clinical trial and epidemiological data in this area and it would make a worthwhile addition to the libraries of complementary medicine researchers.

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