

Manual of Clinical Oncology 6th Edition

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The sixth edition of the *Manual of Clinical Oncology* is in essence, a concise textbook of oncology.

The information is presented in a consistent format, with the chapters grouped into four parts. Part one presents the general aspects of cancer management, such as the principles of diagnosis and treatment, definitions and statistics, treatment modalities, supportive care and communication strategies. Parts two and three address specific disease groups, covering epidemiology and aetiology, pathology and natural history, clinical presentation, diagnostic methods, staging and prognostic factors, prevention and early detection, management and follow-up. Part four presents complications according to end organ involvement, whether by local invasion, metastasis, paraneoplasia or therapy. The chapters themselves are organised into a series of bold type headings and sub-headings, which flow logically and are quick and easy to locate.

At the end of the book there is a series of appendices with detailed tables presenting the glossary of cytogenetic nomenclature, toxicity of chemotherapy, tumour identifiers and chemotherapy regimens for lymphomas.

This is a useful reference book to clarify questions that arise in day-to-day practice and gets referred to frequently, rather than some of the larger, bulkier textbooks. It is packed with information suitable for clinicians with varied knowledge and experience. The section on cell reproduction and cancer growth has proven very useful to assist newer staff to understand the underlying principles of cytotoxic chemotherapy, along with the subsequent chapter on the different classes of drugs used. The section on complications is well written and particularly relevant for nursing staff, both for prevention and problem solving, as is the section on supportive care, which offers some useful management strategies for various symptoms of the disease and/or treatments.

As with a large percentage of oncology texts, it is written for a North American audience, so occasionally the drugs discussed will not apply in an Australian context. However, it was interesting to read about the newer targeted agents such as the Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitors and some of the more recently developed monoclonal antibodies that we may see in future clinical use.

In summary, this is a handy little desk reference that provides clear concise information in a very accessible format. Perhaps what I liked most, is that it reminds us that a person's experience of cancer does not follow a clinical course of a predictable statistical model. Its main purpose is to guide the oncology clinician in their therapeutic decision making, in order to tailor the intervention to the individual using a sound synthesis of good science, personal experience and common sense.

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