

BOOK REVIEWS

Cancer - Principles & Practice of Oncology Volumes One and Two (8th Edition)

Vincent T. DeVita Jr, Theodore S. Lawrence and Steven A. Rosenberg

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This textbook is considered the authoritative reference text for oncology and the 8th Edition continues this tradition. It is set out in a logical format starting with the molecular biology of cancer. As would be expected, there are new expanded sections on genomics and proteomics, as well as covering telomeres and cell immortalisation. In discussing the principles of oncology, causation, epidemiology and the principles behind each of the major treatment modalities, detailed sections on each of the major drug classes cover their use and toxicities. There is also a large section on biotherapeutics with the growth of targeted therapies, and subsequently the design issues which arise in clinical trials of these agents.

The section on the practice of oncology starts with prevention and screening and moves to diagnostic techniques, highlighting many that also cross over to treatment such as the interventional radiologic techniques. There is also a comprehensive section on endoscopy. The bulk of this section on practice covers the tumour types by anatomical location and each chapter is set out in a similar order for ease of navigation, focusing on the multimodality management of each cancer. Although adverse effects are described in the section related to treatment modalities,

common side-effects such as myelosuppression, emesis, fatigue and organ toxicities have their own chapters.

Psychosocial issues and rehabilitation are covered, along with a specific chapter dealing with survivorship. An interesting collection of topics related to the practice of oncology entitled 'Societal Issues in Oncology', provides the opportunity to discuss ethics, quality, health disparities and regulatory issues, while 'Information Systems in Oncology' examines the cancer presence on the internet and the evolution of the electronic medical record.

The two volume set concludes with a chapter on complementary therapies, followed by the consideration of newer therapies spanning robotic surgery to nanotechnology.

As expected, each chapter is very well referenced, which makes this book a valuable resource. However, to me, the most valuable capability was to be able to access the full contents online. Moreover it is fully searchable, and in testing this I found it much easier to find what I needed by electronic searching than by referring to the 112 page index. As well as the text itself, the online resources include all of the images, which are searchable and can be downloaded. Further, there is a quiz section where the readers can test their knowledge on a large range of topics from the book. To keep current the website gives access to PPO updates and focus articles in the form of monographs on recent topics.

Rather than designed to be read from cover to cover, this is a definitive reference book which should sit on each oncology specialist's shelf. It is greatly enhanced by its additional online presence.

Ian Oliver, Cancer Council Australia, Sydney, NSW.