



## Abeloff's Clinical Oncology 4th Edition Expert Consult Premium Edition

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Churchill Livingstone (2008)  
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This is not a book for the faint-hearted or weak-limbed. My first thought on receiving it was "I'm going to need a block-and-tackle to lift it and reinforced shelving to hold it!" Weighing in at 5kg, it's a book to reckon with.

There are 114 chapters divided into three parts: Part I is entitled 'Science of Clinical Oncology' and discusses the biology and genesis of cancer, as well as diagnostic methods, prevention and treatment of cancer. Part II, 'Problems Common to Cancer and its Therapy', looks at symptom management, palliative care, metastases and problems associated with treatment. There is also a section in here on 'special populations' including the elderly, pregnancy and HIV. Part III, 'Specific Malignancies', does exactly what it says on the page, with 44 disease-specific chapters. I can't think of a malignancy that isn't covered here and includes a chapter on cancer of unknown primary.

Each part is colour-coded and chapters are easily found thanks to the comprehensive, well organised contents pages, which are well presented in decent-sized, clear type.

The book is aimed at medical students, trainees, oncology experts and other physicians who see patients with cancer and it does this very well. It is not for most nurses or allied health professionals and doesn't pretend to be, except for those with a deep interest or thirst for knowledge...or with plenty of money...or strong arms and back.

Each chapter has, on its first page, a summary of key points that the editors claim would "...allow one to pass a board exam." Each chapter presents its subject very thoroughly, to molecular depth in places, and on the whole, well laid out with supporting tables, diagrams and images. The only exception to this is in the chapter on systemic therapy that contains 14 pages of chemotherapeutic agents, their drug class, dosage form, interactions and other information presented as page after page of solid text, all of which is the same size and weight.

The book is well referenced throughout. The 48-page chapter on colon cancer, for example, has 519 references.

The (almost) 290 contributors are all North American-based and as such, some phraseology, spelling, nomenclature and guidelines may confuse. The authors claim that this book is multidisciplinary in its approach, though this is one of those 'lost in translation' moments. The authors are alluding to the fact that the book is a collaboration of oncology disciplines, rather than a more all-inclusive definition of 'multidisciplinary' encompassing nursing and allied health professionals.

The price of the book includes a full online version which is fully searchable and makes it even more accessible. Once registered, the owner can log on to it anywhere (if you have a computer and internet access, of course). This helps solve the occupational health and safety issues of trying to lift the printed version!

Overall I found this to be an excellent book. It is very easy to 'dip in', search online or find specific oncology information. I wouldn't necessarily spend this sort of money on it as an individual, but it would be a worthwhile investment for an oncology unit for access for all, especially with the online version included. This, for me, would make the cost worthwhile.

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