

M. Sibilía et al. (eds): Drugs for HER-2-positive breast cancer. Milestones in drug therapy

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Published online: 22 February 2012
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Identification of HER-2 as a molecular target in a subset of breast cancer patients has transformed the treatment approach and improved outcomes in this group. The notion that HER-2 positivity is a negative prognostic marker has been strongly challenged in recent years with the introduction of effective anti-HER-2 therapies. Better understanding of interwoven EGFR/ErbB signalling pathways has led to better targeting.

This book takes readers on a journey from HER-2 signalling to therapeutic use of trastuzumab in the neoadjuvant, adjuvant and metastatic settings. The first chapter (The EGFR/ErbB family in breast cancer: from signalling to therapy, by WJ Köstler and Y Yarden) comprehensively reviews the preclinical data. It is a tour-de-force and should be essential reading for anyone setting out in the HER-2 research field.

Clinically, there is in-depth discussion of mechanisms of trastuzumab resistance and the rationale for the paradigm

shift of treatment beyond progression, which is against traditional oncology principles that treatment should cease when the disease shows clinical resistance. The book finishes with exciting chapters on newer generation targeted therapies for HER-2-positive breast cancer including pertuzumab and lapatinib. Since the book's publication, encouraging clinical trial data has emerged on the role of combination anti-HER-2 therapy, but more mature data is keenly awaited. The ideal sequence or combination of targeted therapies following failure of first-line treatment for HER-2-positive disease is not known and further research into this is certainly warranted. Other small molecule inhibitors that target both HER-1 and HER-2 with different potency and affinity further expand our potential future therapeutic armoury in the event of treatment failure.

Overall, this small book covers the topic of HER-2 inhibition very well in a field that is rapidly changing.

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