Social Dilemmas in Cancer Prevention

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Edited by

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Preface

My intentions for this book are that it should provide an arena for frank debate on the clash between government paternalism and the autonomy of the individual as applied to cancer prevention in the community. The debate involves not only the doctors, nurses, psychologists and other professionals involved in the day-to-day care of cancer patients and educating the public, but also epidemiologists, sociologists and health economists who are concerned with strategies for controlling and preventing cancer in the community.

Contributors are drawn from both sides of the Atlantic in order to emphasise contrasts in the attitudes of different types of society in the West. The participating authors have written in clear language and avoided jargon because the topics discussed are of vital interest not only to health professionals but also to professionals from a variety of disciplines and even lay readers. As a result, no specialist knowledge is required to understand the discussion and the contents of each book are planned so that they can easily be read from cover to cover.

This book also has a wider context when considered alongside two other titles I have had published: *Cost versus Benefit in Cancer Care* and *Ethical Dilemmas in Cancer Care*.

These books debate the most cost effective use of limited health resources, and the need for guidelines to cover serious ethical problems in the management of the cancer patient, respectively. The underlying theme of all three books is the need to train health professionals in the art of responding to people's human needs as opposed to the science of managing their disease.

It is hoped that correction of misconceptions, clarification of inconsistent thinking and exposure of controversial issues will lead to better management of the medical, personal and social problems involved in

fighting cancer. At the very least, the obstacles standing in our way will become clearer.

I would like to thank all the contributors for the way in which they have responded to the challenge of the book. I have been persuaded to permit slight overlap between chapters in some places in order that each chapter shall be complete in itself.

London, 1989

B.A.S.