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Bladder Cancer

Edited by

E. J. Zingg and D. M. A. Wallace

With 50 Figures

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E. J. Zingg, MD
Professor and Chairman, Department of Urology,
University of Berne, Inselspital,
3010 Berne, Switzerland

D. M. A. Wallace, FRCS
Consultant Urologist, Department of Urology,
Queen Elizabeth Medical Centre,
Birmingham, England

Series Editor

Geoffrey D. Chisholm, ChM, FRCS, FRCSEd
Professor of Surgery, University of Edinburgh;
Consultant Urological Surgeon,
Western General Hospital,
Edinburgh, Scotland

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Series Editor's Foreword

Cancer of the bladder has a bad reputation: the combination of urinary problems and malignancy gives just cause for continuing concern. Not only is this common cancer a burden to the patient but, because of the need for regular follow-up, it creates a large workload on the urological services.

It might be imagined that the bladder would give early warning signals of disease, and indeed it may do so; yet it can also be hesitant to reveal its severity. Thus there are many problems that create challenges in the diagnosis and management. Prevention is still the first goal of an oncologist, with early detection of early disease being the next best option. Early bladder cancer is amenable to several therapeutic approaches, but we have still to determine the best approach. The management of more advanced invasive bladder cancer all too often leads to disappointment, and we remain uncertain as to the optimum approach—surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy or some combination of these. Although none of these problems may be fully answered either now or in the near future, many people are working towards their solution, and the rate of progress needs to be documented from time to time. This volume aims to set the standard for the present state of our knowledge on bladder cancer.

The editors, Professor Ernst Zingg and Mr. Michael Wallace, have gathered together the best opinions on a wide range of topics relating to bladder cancer. All the contributors have written from a considerable depth of experience and their combined comments represent the balance of current thinking and established practice. There is obvious significance in the unusual method chosen for presenting the management of invasive cancer. This chapter, with its four subsections, reveals the divergence of opinion and illustrates how a single individual cannot express a judgement on this much debated subject. Readers will have to draw their own conclusions, and, for many, these will be related to their local facilities and expertise.

The topic of urinary diversion was the subject of a previous volume in this series; however the sections on urinary diversion in malignant disease and stoma care remain as relevant as before.

By assembling such a strong team of experts the editors have easily achieved the aim of this series, namely to provide a useful contribution to the clinical practice of Urology.

Edinburgh, March 1985

Geoffrey D. Chisholm

Preface

Bladder cancer is the second commonest urological malignancy and is one of the major problems in urology. There is already an enormous volume of literature on bladder cancer, covering a wide variety of related subjects, and these papers appear in a wide variety of journals and monographs. It is an almost impossible task for the clinician to keep abreast of the literature because of the constant flow of new ideas, information and results. This is especially true in the biology of bladder tumours, in improvements of diagnostic methods and in the treatment of superficial tumours. In contrast, the results of the treatment of invasive bladder cancer show very little improvement and we appear to be reaching the limits of our current therapy with surgery and/or radiotherapy. This, however, remains a highly controversial area with clinicians differing widely in their opinions over present management, but united in their belief that the search for more effective systemic therapy is now the most important task in the treatment of this disease. When this has been found then we expect that most of the present arguments over treatment will become obsolete. Conducting clinical trials and evaluating data on invasive bladder cancer is notoriously difficult, and the results of most studies have been disappointingly inconclusive. We must try to understand the causes of these failures and learn from the mistakes of the past so that any new therapy can be rapidly and critically evaluated.

With the increasing complexity of diagnostic and therapeutic methods there is a growing need for patients, particularly those with invasive disease or poor prognostic factors, to be referred to specialised urological units that are equipped to undertake all aspects of investigation and treatment of such patients. This calls for close cooperation and understanding between the urologist, the general practitioner and all the specialists involved in the management of such patients.

This volume provides a review of the present management of bladder cancer which, in addition to covering the practical aspects of treatment, also emphasises the importance of understanding the biology, pathology and classification of these tumours when making therapeutic decisions. It is intended that this volume will be of use, not just to urologists, but to radiotherapists, oncologists, general surgeons and all medical practitioners who may be involved in what must now become the multidisciplinary management of patients with bladder cancer.

We are pleased that we have been able to gather such a team of highly qualified contributors to this book from many different centres. It has been a stimulating and rewarding venture, although many difficulties have had to be overcome in producing and editing such a multinational work. We make no apology for there being some repetition and divergence of opinion expressed herein. Our theme has been to present the evidence, especially in those areas of controversy, so that the readers may decide how best to treat the patient in their hands and in their departments; every patient must be treated as an individual.

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January 1985

D. M. A. Wallace
E. J. Zingg

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Contributors

R. Ackermann, MD

Professor and Chairman, Department of Urology, University of
Düsseldorf, D-4000 Düsseldorf, Federal Republic of Germany

M. C. Bishop, MD, FRCS

Consultant Urological Surgeon, Department of Urology, City
Hospital, Hucknall Road, Nottingham, England

J. P. Blandy, DM, MCh, FRCS, FACS

Professor of Urology, The London Hospital Medical College, Turner
Street, London, England

J. B. deKernion, MD

Associate Professor, Division of Urology, Department of Surgery,
UCLA School of Medicine, 10833 LeConte Avenue, Los Angeles,
California, USA

U. Engelmann, MD

Department of Urology, Johannes Gutenberg-University Hospital,
Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany

T. B. Hargreave, MS, FRCS

Senior Lecturer in Urology, University of Edinburgh, Honorary
Consultant Urological Surgeon, University Department of
Surgery/Urology, Western General Hospital, Crewe Road,
Edinburgh, Scotland

R. Hohenfellner, MD

Professor and Chairman, Department of Urology, Johannes
Gutenberg-University Hospital, Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany

G. H. Jacobi, MD

Professor of Urology, Department of Urology, Johannes
Gutenberg-University Hospital, Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany

K. H. Kurth, MD

Department of Urology, Erasmus University
3015 GD Rotterdam, The Netherlands

W. Lutzeyer, MD

Professor and Chairman, Department of Urology,
Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule, 5100 Aachen,
Federal Republic of Germany

E. Messing, MD

Assistant Professor, Division of Urology/Department of Surgery,
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine, 600 Highland Avenue,
Madison, Wisconsin 53792 USA

P. C. Peters, MD

Professor and Chairman, Division of Urology, Southwestern Medical
School, The University of Texas, Dallas, Texas 85253 USA

P. N. Plowman, MA, MD, FRCP, FRCR

Consultant in Radiotherapy and Oncology, St. Bartholomew's
Hospital and the Hospital for Sick Children, London, England

H. Rübber, MD

Department of Urology, Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische
Hochschule, 5100 Aachen, Federal Republic of Germany

D. M. A. Wallace, FRCS

Consultant Urologist, Department of Urology, Queen Elizabeth
Medical Centre, Birmingham, England

J. N. Webb, MA, MD

Chairman, Department of Pathology,
Western General Hospital, Crewe Road, Edinburgh, Scotland

E. J. Zingg, MD

Professor and Chairman, Department of Urology, University of
Berne, Inselspital, 3010 Berne, Switzerland