

Pancreatic Cancer

Pancreatic Cancer

Pathogenesis, Diagnosis, and Treatment

Edited by

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Springer Science+Business Media, LLC

ISBN 978-1-4612-7294-6 ISBN 978-1-4612-1810-4 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4612-1810-4

© 1998 Springer Science+Business Media New York
Originally published by Humana Press Inc. in 1998
Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1998

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Cover design by Patricia F. Cleary.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Preface

In spite of the fact that pancreatic cancer continues to be a devastating disease in which few patients are cured, the last decade has seen a number of truly significant advances in the field. Enormous strides have been made in our understanding of the basic cellular and molecular processes that influence the development of this malignancy, and the characterization of the genetic abnormalities that are associated with it. These advances in basic science represent the most likely area from which significant improvements in the management of pancreatic cancer are likely to come. Thus, a number of the contributions to this book are concerned with these issues, as well as their potential clinical relevance.

Advances have been made as well in the areas of the diagnosis and staging of pancreatic cancer, as well as its nonoperative management. They have resulted in fewer patients undergoing surgery for the disease, increased the likelihood of resection in those who are operated on, and generally improved the quality of life. These are reviewed in chapters that discuss the latest techniques for genetic screening for pancreatic cancer, the value of tumor antigens, advances in diagnostic radiology, and the roles of laparoscopy (diagnostic and therapeutic) and palliative endoscopic stenting.

The section on treatment of pancreatic cancer includes contributions from surgeons in the United States and Japan, who review their experiences with standard forms of pancreatic resections and the so-called radical or extended pancreatic resection, which some have viewed as an improvement over the standard Whipple pancreaticoduodenectomy. Up-to-date information is also provided about the efficacy and roles of chemotherapy and radiotherapy in this disease, as well as the theoretical basis and potential for gene therapy. The final chapter is devoted to a consideration of the quality of life of pancreatic cancer patients, an area that is assuming increasing importance in the discussion of cancer treatment in general.

Pancreatic Cancer: Pathogenesis, Diagnosis, and Treatment was created in an effort to reflect the current state of both the art and the science in the field of pancreatic cancer, with contributions from renowned experts in Asia, Europe, and the United States. It should be of interest to basic scientists as well as all clinicians who are working in this challenging area.

Howard A. Reber, MD

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