

Gastrointestinal and Liver Tumors

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Foreword

Cancer of the digestive system, which includes the gastrointestinal tract, liver, pancreas and gall bladder, represents a major cause of cancer morbidity and mortality worldwide. In the year 2000, these malignancies were responsible for 30% of all cancers and 36% of all cancer-associated deaths (Parkin DM, Bray FI, Devesa SS, Cancer burden in the year 2000. The global picture. Eur J Cancer 2001; 37: S4-66).

This book provides a concise, but more than adequate overview of these malignancies and their premalignant states. It gives updated information on etiology – whether genetic or environmental, pathology, clinical features and treatments. It also gives information on screening, prevention and chemoprevention, where available. Understanding these latter features are of prime importance as we clinicians are moving from treatment of endstage disease, to prevention, chemoprevention and early diagnosis in order to reduce the cancer burden, to try and delay or at least modulate its manifestations and cure it by diagnosing in the earliest and curable stage.

As physicians, we are used to emphasizing diagnosis and treatment of disease. Today we already have some of the tools needed to *prevent* several important prevalent gastrointestinal malignancies. These include: immunization against hepatitis B, which will significantly reduce the incidence of hepatoma; improved hygiene and nutrition to decrease the prevalence and duration of exposure and severity of infection from *Helicobacter pylori* so as to decrease the occurrence of gastric cancer; colon cancer incidence can be reduced in the long-term by lifestyle modulation and morbidity reduced immediately by population screening, preventive polypectomy and early cancer diagnosis.

The chapter authors are authorities in their fields and have produced a text for the practicing physician who needs an easy to read and complete source of information on Digestive Cancers. This book will be an excellent source of information for the treating clinician, whether gastroenterologist, surgeon or oncologist.

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Preface

What can be a rationale to produce a medical textbook in the era of electronic multimedia? In the view of the editors the acquisition of information and knowledge by reading a book is still more delightful for most of us than by manoeuvring through PC menus. However, in order to keep up with the rapid progress in gastroenterology and hepatology, a short lag time between the writing of the individual chapters and the release of the book has to be assured.

The goal of this book is to present the diagnosis and treatment of gastrointestinal and liver tumors to medical doctors in hospitals or private practices, residents and libraries with interest in high-standard education in clinical oncology. On the one hand the book should provide comprehensive in-depth information on the entire clinical management of alimentary tract tumors; the text is enriched by high-quality illustrations and artwork. On the other hand the structure of chapters should allow quick reference to a topic. Therefore, text elements such as summaries, tables and treatment algorithms were introduced to make selective reading possible. The homogeneity of the individual chapters was assured by presenting all aspects in the same order (epidemiology, screening where appropriate, symptoms and clinical signs, diagnostic studies, staging and classification, treatment, prognosis, follow-up, future perspectives). The presentation of imaging techniques was integrated into those organ chapters where they are mostly applied. A paragraph on future perspectives was added to every chapter in order to point at new diagnostic and therapeutic tools that have not yet entered the clinical stage.

The final chapter of the book deals with the supportive care of cancer patients. In many of them there will be a stage when tumor-targeted therapies fail to control malignant growth. In these circumstances gastroenterologists should reassure their patients that best supportive care can be highly effective in alleviating symptoms.

Authors from more than one country with a high reputation within their respective areas reflect the international standard of the content. It was also our goal to demonstrate the interdisciplinary approach to patient care and to open new ways of cooperation between the classical disciplines of clinical medicine. With contributions by many authors, redundancy of information is unavoidable. We have not eliminated background information required to comprehend a complex topic even if it may appear in another chapter. Medical textbooks are usually not read from cover to cover like a novel; therefore we hope that remaining repetitions are not disturbing the general impression.

The book is dedicated to our cancer patients in the hope for further improvements in the management of their diseases.

Würzburg, Houston, Amsterdam, January 2003

WOLFGANG SCHEPPACH, ROBERT S. BRESALIER, GUIDO N.J. TYTGAT

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Calculation of Body Surface Area

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