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Editor

Improving Oncology Worldwide

Education, Clinical Research
and Global Cancer Care

 Springer

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ISSN 2523-3084 ISSN 2523-3092 (electronic)
Sustainable Development Goals Series
ISBN 978-3-030-96052-0 ISBN 978-3-030-96053-7 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-96053-7>

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Color wheel and icons: From <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>

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This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

To our patients and students, who instill in us the desire to be better professionals.

To our colleagues, who fight the same fights.

To our families, who support us in our pursuit to fight cancer and who take care of us when we come home bruised and battered.

Preface

Dear Reader,

When planning a meeting 2 years ago, a possible pandemic never even crossed my mind even though I was aware of the possibility, having read *The Coming Plague* by Laurie Garrett almost 25 years ago and having had to cancel the attendance of the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research in Toronto in 2003. But life is full of surprises, good ones and the ones we strive to forget but that will still keep us up at night.

As the Scientific Director of the Advanced Oncology study program of Ulm University, my goal was to organize a riveting alumni meeting of previous and current students of our study program and to learn the progress they made in their areas of expertise at the Reisenburg Castle, a scientific retreat location belonging to Ulm University and the place for good networking.

Ensuring the smooth running of the study program is my primary occupation. I do that by ensuring its high quality and making contacts with highly qualified lecturers and supporting the students so they manage their studies successfully. However, I consider it also my duty to ensure that their studies give them the tools to thrive in their fight against cancer. This is what many of our current and past students set out to do in their own environments. Each one of us has made an impact in the lives of others. There might be roadblocks along the way, sometimes bumpers, sometimes huge obstacles like uprisings and wars. But we will always care for the people falling ill with cancers and make their lives better or at least more bearable.

Over the years, I have learned many things from my students, most of all resilience and perseverance. This is what this book is about: to make things better by bettering the education, by conducting research, and providing the best cancer care everywhere. This marathon is broken up into manageable pieces that you hopefully find inspiring to assess your own situation and apply knowledge there. Please feel free to reach out to the different authors—each one of them has put their heart into their chapter.

The selection of the authors was made based on their availability and my perception of their strength. Some of the authors I had requested had agreed at first and retracted later. The pandemic had its grip on them, making us miss the parts from Canada, or wars, which made the contributions from Libya and Iraq missing.

This book in its entirety shall contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal 3 of the United Nations: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being

for all at all ages.” I think that the approaches described herein particularly aim at the defined targets 3.4, 3.8, 3b, and 3c.

The alumni meeting, which this book is based upon, was held virtually in October 2020. It was sad to not be able to meet in person, but then, the upside was that so many more people could attend and be inspired. The comradery was our usual one, and we were happy to learn from each other. I hope, you will be, too.

Ulm, Germany
June 2021

Uta Schmidt-Straßburger

Acknowledgments

People

Thank you to all the authors and discussants for your contributions during the meeting and for writing your chapters. We made it!

This book would not be possible without the support of our infrastructure, the Advanced Oncology core team and its present members, Ms. Bettina Wabitsch, Ms. Ursula Russo, and Mr. Sebastian Dannenberg, and the Division of Learning and Teaching, particularly its head, Dr. Claudia Grab-Kroll, but also all the other lovely people involved in e-education and educational research.

The Comprehensive Cancer Center Ulm has supported the study program right from the beginning, through the years and continues to do so. I am particularly grateful to Prof. Hartmut Döhner, Prof. Thomas Seufferlein and Prof. Stephan Stilgenbauer for their unwavering support and contributions. I am at least equally indebted to Ms. Colette Meister for her work, insight, and help.

A big thank you to the administrators of the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD), Ms. Leokadia Staffa and Ms. Arngard Leifert, for being at my disposal whenever I had a question.

I want to thank the people of Springer Nature for guiding me through the publishing process, particularly Ms. Antonella Cerri and Ms. Niveka Somasundaram.

Funding Body

The funds for publishing this book were attributed to the study program by the DAAD.

About the Book

Improving Oncology Worldwide is unique in that it describes strategies and experiences of highly skilled professionals in improving oncology care worldwide. The contributors have studied at Ulm University in the past and have had exposure to the ESMO/ASCO global curriculum in oncology or are part of Ulm University faculty.

The book is structured into three parts with several chapters each, reflecting the individual experiences. It covers ways to improve oncology education and scientific training, how do we set up and run a clinical research facility ethically and efficiently, but mostly it addresses the challenges that the workforce encounters in the real world. It addresses real-world oncologists all over the world and their allies throughout the associated industries.

One possible solution to meet the growing demand in oncology *education* is to provide e-learning or blended learning. Science education and good scientific practice are other aspects. How to set up medical training in a low- or middle-income setting so that all parties will be satisfied with the outcome?

Clinical research in the field of oncology is currently in full bloom due to the coming of age of targeted therapies as well as the advent of immune therapy. Experiences in setting up relevant infrastructures in low- and middle-income settings are being shared as well as the experiences from the “other” side, high-income settings, and the pharmaceutical industry. The contributions strive to demonstrate how to perform good science in low- and middle-income settings.

The main challenge remains the daily patient care of the oncologist. Needs differ for patients and physicians depending on the factors like peace, social and gender equality. The main challenges of today’s oncologists seem to be the ever-growing *patient care* and administrative workload and the risk of burn-out. What are the best strategies to maintain a healthy work-life for the benefit of the patients, the physicians, and society?

Based on single contributions by alumni and faculty of the study program, the three parts contain summarizing articles. The authors of these chapters bring the single contributions to the next level by drawing conclusions about the projects presented and the ensuing discussions among the participants of the meeting. In other words, even though the different contributions will be aimed at particular targets of the presenter’s own experience, the main aim of this entire book is to draw conclusions that are valid beyond the setting of an alumni workshop and that line out areas of need for further improvement in addition to the solutions introduced already.

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Abbreviations

AACR	American Association for Cancer Research
ASCO	American Society of Clinical Oncology
ASTRO	American Society for Radiation Oncology
b-learning	Blended learning, a mixture of e-learning and learning in attendance
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
edX	An American massive open online course provider
e-learning	Learning using online resources
ESMO	European Society for Medical Oncology
ESO	European School of Oncology
ESTRO	European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology
GCP	Good Clinical Practice
HIC	High-Income Country
IARC	International Agency for Research on Cancer
LMIC	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NCCP	National Cancer Control Plan
NCI	National Cancer Institute
Sars-CoV-2	Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2
SPOC	Small Private Online Course
UICC	Union for International Cancer Control
WCT	WHO Classification of Tumours group
WHO	World Health Organization