Book review


This title is not only about adjuvant treatment. Rather, this little book attempts an extensive review of many of the important current issues in genitourinary oncology.

An excellent literature review on systemic therapy of advanced renal cell carcinoma is presented. Hormonal therapy, chemotherapy, immunotherapy, combined biologic therapy, cell therapy with autolymphocytes and TIL cells, chemo-immunotherapy, tumor vaccines and radiation are discussed. In addition, the newer treatment approaches of combining chemotherapy with 13 CIS-retinoic acid, fluorinated pyrimidine modulation and reversal of multi-drug resistance are mentioned. A surgical chapter is devoted to excision of metastatic lesions, nephrectomy in the presence of unresectable metastases, the rationale behind initial cytoreductive surgery and adjuvant surgery after initial biologic response modifier therapy.

Relevant issues in the management of prostate cancer are addressed. A chapter is devoted to the controversial topic neo-adjuvant hormonal therapy prior to radical prostatectomy. Patterns of failure after radical prostatectomy are reviewed as well as PSA monitoring and what to do in the case of biochemical failure. Issues concerning when and whether or not to apply adjuvant radiation and hormonal therapy after radical prostatectomy are presented.

A substantial part of the book is devoted to advanced prostate cancer. The rationale behind combined androgen blockade (CAB) and a review of randomized studies of CAB versus monotherapy, including a meta-analysis of over 5000 patients is presented. Questions regarding the role and benefit of this therapy remain. A chapter is devoted to new molecules in advanced hormone refractory prostate cancer, although I am not sure that I agree with the authors that the majority of patients with prostate cancer have metastatic disease at the time of diagnosis especially not in the era of PSA monitoring and screening. In addition, Liarazole seems to have no place in this disease after a randomized trial showed poorer survival than with prednisone alone. Novel approaches to hormonal therapy such as the anti-androgen withdrawal syndrome, intermittent androgen therapy, and deferred anti-androgen therapy are discussed in another chapter. Finally, the subject of an entire chapter concerns the management of metastatic bone disease.

Superficial bladder cancer, locally advanced disease and metastatic disease are covered in this book. Molecular pathways in the pathogenesis of bladder cancer are reviewed. Attention is paid to molecular prognostic factors such as: DNA ploidy, EGF receptor, c-erbB-2, retinoblastoma gene, E-Cadherin, monoclonal antibodies and p53. The urologist in training will appreciate the chapter on the rationale and scientific basis for adjuvant intravesical chemotherapy for superficial disease with a handy review of the common chemotherapeutic agents. The current status of BCG and other immunotherapeutic agents are likewise reviewed in another chapter. Yet, another chapter devotes itself to dose reductions of BCG to lower toxicity, new chemotherapeutic agents, hyaluronidase therapy to enhance drug penetration, and verapamil. The reader will be interested in some of the newer innovative oral approaches such as aged garlic extract, Lactobacillus casei and megadose vitamins. Finally, chemoprevention with retinoids is addressed.

An excellent review of neo-adjuvant versus adjuvant chemotherapy for patients with locally advanced bladder cancer is presented. The rationale, advantages and disadvantages are discussed along with all of the relevant clinical trials. For metastatic advanced bladder cancer new active agents and regimens include the taxanes and gemcitabine.

Two important issues for patients with testis cancer are discussed. Separate discussions on stage I non seminomatous germ cell tumors (NSGCT) and on seminoma include relevant information on surveillance studies, prognostic factors, adjuvant chemotherapy for patients at high risk, and radiation therapy for patients with seminoma. In another chapter, indications for post-chemotherapy retroperitoneal lymph node dissection for NSGCT and for seminoma are addressed. The urologist in training will also find a detailed explanation of the delicate surgical technique.

Tumor biology is highlighted at the end of the book. Research on the molecular events associated with the pathogenesis of cancer is emphasized. Angiogenesis, growth factors, cytokine modulation of tumor invasiveness, Cathepsin D expression, E-Cadherin expression, and telomerase activation in cancer cells are discussed. Experimental work with gene therapy in renal, bladder and prostate cancer is reviewed. Finally, penis cancer, rare in Western Europe, accounts for <1% of all urologic tumors. Management according to T stage of the primary tumor and the regional lymph nodes is reviewed. Neo-adjuvant and adjuvant therapy, including chemotherapy and radiation, are discussed. The last chapter presents quality of life studies, primarily by the EORTC in prostate, bladder and testicular cancer.

This small but very comprehensive book provides the urologist or oncologist in training with an updated review of many of the important issues in genitourinary oncology.

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