



Preface

Breast cancer: new concepts in management



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Guest Editors

The modern treatment of breast cancer dates back to the late 19th century, when William Halsted described the radical mastectomy. At the time, the treatment of breast cancer was based on the results of retrospective studies and anecdotal experience. Today, it is largely predicated on the results of randomized controlled trials. These trials have shown that the extent of mastectomy has no impact on mortality. Other trials have shown that screening, adjuvant systemic therapy, and radiotherapy can reduce breast cancer mortality. Surgeons have played a pivotal role in the design and conduct of many of these trials, and will undoubtedly contribute to important trials in the future. Yet, the optimal treatment of breast cancer today requires a multidisciplinary approach. Surgeons who treat breast cancer generally work closely with colleagues from other disciplines, and should have an understanding of their role in the management of this disease.

The last issue of *The Surgical Clinics of North America* dedicated to breast cancer management was published in October 1999. Since then, there have been several important developments of relevance to surgeons, which are discussed in this issue. This issue of *The Surgical Clinics of North America* contains 14 articles, written by experts who provide not only a thorough review of the literature, but also their personal perspectives on controversial issues.

We are making good progress in the treatment of breast cancer. During the past 10 years, breast cancer mortality rates have declined in many

western countries. Prior to this period, breast cancer mortality rates in these countries were either stable or increasing for several decades. Hopefully, the decline in mortality will continue in the years ahead, as well realize the full potential of chemoprevention and newer therapies.

We are indebted to the contributors of this issue of *The Surgical Clinics of North America* for providing timely and concise reviews. Additionally, we wish to thank Catherine Bewick and the editorial staff of the WB Saunders Company for their expert assistance. The publication of this issue has required the collaborative effort of many individuals, and we hope that it serves as a useful guide in the management of breast cancer.

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