



Preface
Melanoma and pigmented lesions



Darrell S. Rigel, MD
Guest Editor

Malignant melanoma is one of the most dangerous cancers seen by physicians. Sadly, one American dies every hour from this disease.

The natural biology of melanoma offers unique opportunities successfully to battle this cancer and to make inroads into the associated mortality rate. The cause of most cases of melanoma is known: excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation. In addition, melanoma is one of the most clear-cut cases of a cancer where early detection and treatment are the keys. Patients with in situ melanomas may have almost a 100% chance of survival, whereas those with advanced tumors may have no effective therapy available. For these reasons, factors related to both primary and secondary prevention of melanoma are of critical importance.

The scope of issues related to melanoma that physicians deal with on an emergency basis, however, go far beyond prevention. Advances in early diagnosis, better definitions of surgical margins, and newer approaches for advanced lesions including

sentinel node biopsy, immunotherapy, and the development of potential vaccines, make this one of the most dynamic areas of medicine. The rapidly rising incidence of melanoma worldwide makes it particularly important to develop advances in these aspects of therapy.

This edition of the *Dermatologic Clinics* is focused on the full spectrum of the newest aspects of melanoma from epidemiology and prevention, through diagnosis, to emerging therapies. It is hoped that this issue will give the practicing physician a greater understanding of the challenges faced in dealing with cancer and enable physicians to deliver the best possible care to melanoma patients.

Darrell S. Rigel, MD
Department of Dermatology
New York University School of Medicine
350 5th Avenue, #7805
New York, NY 10118, USA
E-mail address: dsrigel@prodigy.net