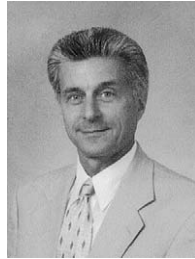


Foreword

Screening for Cancer: Controversy, Challenges and Opportunity



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Consulting Editor

This edition of the *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America* is devoted to cancer screening. The Guest Editor is Thomas K. Weber, MD, Associate Professor of Surgery in the Department of Surgery and Molecular Genetics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City. Dr. Weber since 1999 has been the Director of the Colorectal Oncology and Screening Program and Director of the New York Metropolitan Familial Colorectal Cancer Registry at the Montefiore Medical Center, Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Dr. Weber's academic career has centered around the early detection and prevention of colorectal cancer both in the clinic and in the laboratory.

Cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes account for almost two of every three deaths in this country. These diseases undermine health and can cause great suffering, economic costs and disability. Nevertheless, much of this could be avoided if screening programs were put into effect nationwide in an effort to prevent, and in the case of cancer, detect the disease in an early stage. With this, significant reductions in disability and premature mortality could be achieved. Unfortunately, current disease control efforts are fragmented and underfunded. Furthermore, the reality is that Americans still smoke cigarettes, too many are physically inactive and the prevalence of overweight and obese adults has risen to 65% from 1999 to 2000. These are the factors that confer significant risk not only for cardiovascular disease and diabetes but also cancer.

Whether screening has an impact on the early detection of certain cancers and a decrease in mortality is controversial in some areas. This is especially true for lung cancer, which is reviewed in the chapter by Claudia Henschke, MD. Dr. Henschke has spent the majority of her career involved in the Early Lung Cancer Action Project (ELCAP) with interesting and provocative results. In other areas, such as colorectal cancer, colonoscopy has made an impact in the prevention and early detection of this cancer with a subsequent decrease in the incidence and mortality in the United States. Sidney J. Winawer, MD from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center is an international expert in the screening of colorectal cancer, as evidenced in his excellent article. Prostate cancer and cervical cancer screening are also described in this edition of the *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America*.

Barriers to cancer screening and the failure of most institutions across the United States to make an impact in screening the underserved communities is a major problem. Determinants of cancer disparities and barriers to cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment are described in an excellent article by Drs. Harold Freeman and Kenneth Chu.

I'd like to congratulate Dr. Weber and the contributing authors for an excellent edition which is very timely in the year 2005. Cancer screening can make a difference in many areas and it is our responsibility to push to implement these programs throughout our communities and to fight for the funding that is necessary to make them a success.

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