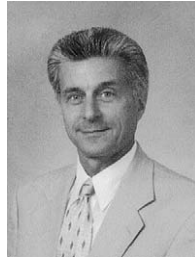


Foreword

Colorectal Cancer



Nicholas J. Petrelli, MD
Consulting Editor

This issue of *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America* is devoted to colorectal cancer. The guest editor is Thomas Anthony, MD, Associate Professor in the Division of Surgical Oncology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, and Chief of Surgical Services at the Veterans Administration North Texas Health Care System. Dr. Anthony has brought together an outstanding group of experts who cover all aspects of colorectal cancer from current screening recommendations to patient-centered outcomes. The issue finishes with an excellent article by Dr. Griffin-Sobel, who represents the Oncology Nursing Society, in which she discusses palliative care issues that patients face when they have this disease.

Although colorectal cancer is third on the estimated new cancer deaths in the United States for both males and females in 2005, the age-adjusted cancer death rates for both genders began to decrease in 1990. Because of the availability of genetic testing for inherited cancer risk, and the impact that colonoscopy has made in the early detection and prevention of colorectal cancer, we are now in an era where colorectal cancer is a preventable entity.

We now know that up to 60% of all cancers can be prevented if individuals adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors that should begin in childhood. Children and young people are, therefore, an important audience for cancer prevention information. The American Cancer Society in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and a conglomerate of other

education, health, and social service agencies, have identified schools as a key system for disseminating effective cancer prevention information. By aiding 15,000 school districts in the United States to deliver strong, coordinated school health programs and quality school health education, the American Cancer Society is positively influencing the health of more than 45 million school children. I mention this because driving forces across the United States are making an effort to shift the cancer care paradigm toward early detection and prevention. In Delaware alone, the state government in 2004 contributed millions of dollars to provide colonoscopy screening for all individuals—insured and uninsured—over the age of 50. Additional funds are available for an uninsured individual who is discovered to have a cancer that needs treatment.

Dr. Anthony states in his preface that the main goal of this issue of *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America* was “to provide for the readership a compendium of information regarding up-to-date clinical evidence and practices for many aspects of managing colorectal cancer patients, . . .” The article by Drs. Rodriguez-Bigas, Chang, and Skibber, which discusses the advancing field of colorectal cancer genetics from the perspective of a practicing surgical oncologist, is outstanding. We must also keep in mind that the availability of genetic testing for the inherited syndromes of colorectal cancer has raised a complex set of questions about the psychosocial, ethical, medical, legal, and quality of life implications of using genetic information. In a very comprehensive article, Dr. Leichman traces the history of adjuvant therapy for colon cancer, reviews the evidence for the currently recommended treatment regimens, and provides insight concerning future directions in the adjuvant therapy of this disease. This article is must reading for surgeons who will be able to intelligently discuss the recommendations for adjuvant therapy with their medical oncology colleagues.

Although the treatment world for colorectal cancer is changing rapidly in view of recent chemotherapeutic and targeted agents, the overwhelming majority of the articles presented in this compilation will provide a knowledge base for several years to come. This is especially true of the article by Drs. Hill, O’Connell, and Ko, which outline the epidemiology of colorectal cancer, and the article by Drs. Kehoe and Khatri, which relates to staging and prognosis.

In conclusion, as I have mentioned in previous forewords for the *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America*, this issue, put together by Dr. Anthony, is mandatory reading for residents and fellows in the field of surgery, medical oncology, and radiation oncology. I will add that oncology nurses will also benefit from this compilation. I congratulate Dr. Griffin-Sobel for her contribution and look forward to future contributions to the *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America* by members of the Oncology Nursing Society.

Repetition is the key to education and one’s education should not stop until life ends. We owe this education to our trainees, ourselves, and most importantly, to the patients that we take care of. Congratulations to

Dr. Thomas Anthony and the panel of clinical experts that have contributed to this issue of the *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America*.

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