

Preface



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Guest Editor

The study of genetics and the ever-increasing understanding of the molecular mechanisms underlying carcinogenesis have resulted in the realization that the risk and development of certain cancers can be inherited and thus can affect many members of specific families. The study of these cancers and associated medical conditions has resulted in the identification of various hereditary cancer syndromes.

Of the many health care providers that will participate in a cancer patient's care, it is the surgical oncologist who is frequently in the position to identify that the patient may be affected by a hereditary cancer syndrome. This identification will dramatically influence the patient's care and may have a profound impact on the health of others. It is imperative that the surgical oncologist have a thorough understanding of the various hereditary cancer syndromes including the organs at risk for cancer development, the mode of inheritance and most importantly, the state-of-the-art approaches to treatment. As such, the surgical oncologist has the opportunity to be the quarterback of the patient's care.

In this issue of the *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America*, our goal is to provide a thorough overview of the numerous hereditary cancer syndromes that the general surgical oncologist may encounter. This is organized in an organ-specific context allowing the reader to review and potentially confirm if a hereditary cancer syndrome may play a role in a patient's cancer. Because certain hereditary cancer syndromes include more than one organ system, our organizational structure overlaps in several areas.

Our knowledge of hereditary cancer syndromes as well as the mechanisms for sporadic carcinogenesis continues to grow at an exponential rate. Every attempt has been made to insure that each article is based on the most up-to-date literature. The reader is invited to follow the continued expansion of this body of knowledge.

The contributing authors are recognized experts in their respective fields and they have done an exemplary job of achieving our goal to provide a thorough overview. I sincerely appreciate their expertise, time and efforts, and the quality of this issue is due to their contributions. In that the foundation of hereditary cancer syndromes is alterations in the genome, this text would not be complete if it did not include an article that addresses genomic integrity, one of the central concepts in the molecular basis of

hereditary cancer syndromes. I appreciate Dr. Garth Anderson accepting the challenge of authoring this article for our intended audience.

I am indebted to the authors for the contributions and to Catherine Bewick, the Publishing Editor, and her staff for their guidance and dedication. Finally, it is with sincere appreciation and respect that I thank Dr. Nicholas J. Petrelli for the opportunity to serve as Guest Editor, and for his endorsement of this important topic.

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