

## Foreword



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*Consulting Editor*

This issue of the *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America* is guest edited by Morton Kahlenberg, MD. Dr. Kahlenberg is presently Director of the Baptist Cancer Center and Medical Director of Surgical Oncology Associates of South Texas. He is also Adjunct Associate Professor of Surgery at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Prior to being appointed Director of the Baptist Cancer Center, Dr. Kahlenberg was Chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology at the University of Texas at San Antonio and Associate Professor of Surgery at that Institution.

This issue is devoted to hereditary cancer syndromes, specifically the role of the surgical oncologist in the evaluation and treatment of individuals who have been diagnosed with these syndromes. Dr. Kahlenberg and his colleagues provide an overview of the hereditary cancer syndromes that the general surgical oncologist may encounter throughout his or her career. The articles are organized according to disease sites to make it easier for the reader to focus on specific cancer syndromes.

One of the initial articles in this issue is entitled, "Family Cancer Syndromes: Inherited Deficiencies in Systems for the Maintenance of Genomic Integrity." The senior author is Garth Anderson, PhD, from the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York. Dr. Anderson is an excellent mentor and teacher who has the capability to bring complicated molecular biology to a level that is practical and easy to understand. I know this from personal experience, having been mentored by Dr. Anderson during my professional career at Roswell Park.

As many as 5 percent of cancers that occur in humans appear to be of hereditary etiology. Literature has described more than 50 characterized familial cancer syndromes, most involving diseases that affect several organs, and many can be traced to one or more abnormalities in specific genes. Although studying these syndromes in humans is a difficult task, Dr. Kahlenberg has put together authors who are recognized experts in their respective fields and who have successfully described many of the hereditary cancer syndromes and the role that the surgical oncologist must play.

One out of every four deaths in the United States is caused by cancer. It is second only to heart disease as a cause of death in this country. The ultimate in cancer research is prevention. Our knowledge of hereditary cancer syndromes plays an important role in prevention. One of the most important aspects of family health is an

individual's knowledge of his or her family history. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, knowing our family histories and having knowledge of hereditary cancer syndromes can assist in prevention of and early detection in these family members.

I congratulate Dr. Kahlenberg for successfully bringing together this excellent edition of the *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America*.

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