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Annual 22

Editors: G. Giaccone, R. Schilsky, P. Sondel

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Introduction

This 22nd volume of Cancer Chemotherapy and Biologic Response Modifiers continues in the tradition of providing a timely review of progress and achievements in clinical oncology. As for past annuals, our emphasis is on recent advances in our understanding of anti-cancer drugs, specific malignancies and biological response modifiers, rather than the provision of a comprehensive overview. In order to accomplish this, we are committed to providing useful and clear reviews of the most important perspectives in oncology that have been identified over the past year. Thus, each volume reflects a spectrum of chapters presenting new data, conclusions and recommendations beyond those included in previous annuals. Of the 37 chapters in this volume, 16 are timely updates from the authors of chapters in volume 21; 7 are chapters by new authors, providing a different perspective on topics presented last year; and 14 are entirely new chapters by new authors, reflecting the rapid progress in this field.

The section on drugs includes new chapters on clinical use of epidermal growth factor receptor pathway inhibitors and on angiogenesis pathway inhibitors. These agents have moved rapidly from preclinical models to demonstrated clinical efficacy, and, with the recent FDA approval of cetuximab and bevacizumab, are becoming part of comprehensive oncologic care. The section on tumors provides detailed updates on the past year's advances in our understanding of risk, classification, staging and management of common malignancies. The section on biologics is comprised of five new chapters. Two provide perspective on active immunotherapy through vaccines or cytokine administration. Two provide exciting perspectives on how T cells can be modified to recognize tumor using tumor-reactive monoclonal antibody, via surface labeling with bispecific antibody, or by transfecting the T cells to express antibody-based 'chimeric receptors'. Finally, the biologics section includes an important review detailing the effects of conventional cancer treatment on the patient's immune system, based on state-of-the-art immunologic assessment methodology.

As in the past two annuals, we are pleased to include a special section focused on a disease that has been the target of recent advances. This volume's special section is devoted to recent advances in our understanding and treatment of melanoma. Special detail is included regarding advances in screening, prevention and predisposition for this increasingly frequent disease. Surgical treatment remains the mainstay of therapy for patients diagnosed with localized low-risk melanoma; biologic response modifiers (immune-based therapy) are the prime interventions for patients with higher risk and advanced disease. Chapters on the uses of interferon, and on other cytokines combined with chemotherapy, designated 'biochemotherapy', summarize how and when these approaches have proven to be useful. Four chapters then review separate classes of immunologic interventions for melanoma: the use of vaccination with tumor antigens in the form of peptides or gangliosides; vaccination using DNA that encodes antigens that should induce anti-tumor immunity; novel vaccination strategies using anti-idiotypic monoclonal antibody, or peptide mimics of tumor antigens, to activate T and B cell immunity; and finally the use of melanoma reactive monoclonal antibodies and fusion proteins derived from them.

We thank the authors of these chapters for their state-of-the-art reviews and Elsevier for providing leadership, administrative support, and vision for the production of this 22nd volume in this series. Finally, we thank the researchers and clinicians who have appreciated that the unique information that can be included in this form of a timely annual provides an important and useful complement to traditional textbooks and periodicals.

THE EDITORS

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