

Preface

This book represents the very first volume devoted to the subject of the basic biology of gastric cancer. Although there were major achievements 30–40 years ago in the description of the histopathology of stomach tumors and the preneoplastic conditions that preceded these lesions, it was of course the pioneering (and Nobel prize-winning) studies involving the discovery of *Helicobacter pylori* by Marshall and Warren that set the stage for the more recent insights on the role of chronic inflammation and cancer. As articulated in the chapters of this compendium, written by experts in the field, there have been many impressive advances in our understanding of the pathogenesis of gastric adenocarcinoma, gastric MALT lymphoma, gastrointestinal stromal tumors of the stomach, and gastric carcinoid tumors. The text begins with an overview of these neoplasms and their histopathology, the role of diet and *H. pylori*, and their epidemiology, before moving into the current view and understanding of molecular mechanisms. The book, of course, reflects many of the interests of the editors, with an emphasis on animal models, but also devotes considerable attention to human studies, host genetics, and the role of bacterial factors and other environmental factors influencing the pathogenesis of gastric cancer. The text pays homage to the cutting-edge concepts of cancer stem cells, tumor micro-environment, chronic inflammation, and genetic susceptibility to cancer. Although every potential mechanism contributing to gastric carcinogenesis could not be covered because of space limitations, we have attempted to highlight the important areas that would appeal to a broad readership.

The topics presented in this book should be of interest to clinicians and investigators interested in gastrointestinal cancer, as well as basic investigators in related areas of cancer research. Gastric cancer has in many respects become a paradigm for the broader association between chronic inflammation and cancer, and the association between infection and cancer. At present, it is thought that only 15%–20% of cancers can be directly attributed to infection, but the cause of many cancers is still not known, similar to the situation that existed for gastric cancer before the discovery of *H. pylori*. Thus, we believe that the insights developed from the studies described in these chapters may inform researchers working on other organ-specific neoplasms. In addition, it is our hope that this body of work will stimulate clinical and translational studies that will advance early diagnosis and treatment of gastric tumors.

We extend our appreciation not only to the authors of all the chapters in this book for the tremendous accomplishments, but also to the many reviewers who took the time to critique and edit the manuscripts. The reviewers included John Atherton, Pelayo Correa, Jean Crabtree, Stanley Falkow, JeanMarie Houghton, Peter Isaacson, Robert Jensen, Andrew Leiter, Wai K. Leung, Stephen Meltzer, Christopher A. Moskaluk, Guilleromo Perez-Perez, Arlin Rogers, Massimo Rugge, George Sachs, Linda Samuelson, and Andrea Todisco. We also thank our assistants (Mary Beth Shanahan and Lucy Wilhelm) for their work in formatting and editing the chapters. We acknowledge warmly the patience and attention put into this book by our colleagues at Springer, particularly Rachel Warren and Thomas Brazda. Finally, we especially thank the Funderberg foundation for their creation of the Robert and Sally Funderberg Gastric Cancer Awards, which stimulated interest in this field, and the National Institutes of Health for their support of basic and translational research in gastric cancer.

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