

# Preface

For the Editors, the task of writing a Preface is most satisfying. It represents the completion of the book and a moment of reflection on whether the whole is more than the sum of all the parts. And also, one must reflect on how this book is likely to be utilized in this era of rapid communications.

The Editors first met in May 2003 at a stimulating Italian symposium on endometrial cancer (organizers Drs. Luigi Frigerio, Roberto Grassi and Andrea Lissoni, with participation of the deans of Italian Gynecologic Oncology, Ugo Bianchi and Constantino Mangioni) that took place at Bergamo and Caravaggio. The impressive gains in biology and clinical trials were further discussed by the two editors and others that are co-authors in this venture on this side of the Atlantic at a 2004 Educational Session at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). The pace of progress in various aspects of management of uterine cancer was noteworthy, not only was tumor biology fueling novel hypotheses such as questioning the mesenchymal origin of carcinosarcomas, but knowledge of molecular pathways was beginning to be applied as prognostic and as predictive factors portending benefit from systemic therapies. Surgical staging and sensitive imaging provided the underpinning for refining our treatment algorithms. Finally, a role for chemotherapy had finally become established, principally through phase III studies comparing chemotherapy to radiation in mostly locally advanced stages III and IV that had undergone resection.

Inevitably, this task brought back thoughts of prior efforts going into books covering endometrial cancer. In 1987, an international symposium resulted in publication of a multiauthored book. To this day, it remains a valuable reference to the advent of pharmacology and hormone receptor work in the evaluation of hormonal therapy relevant to endometrial cancer. However, in the intervening 20 years biomedical science has moved far beyond focusing systemic therapy on the first of 'targeted therapies'. We are indebted to all contributors, mostly selected on first-hand knowledge of their expertise and often based on interactions within our institutions or in cooperative groups and scientific societies. We know we added some additional work to their already busy daily lives, but hope they will be pleased with the results.

Covering the subject in a comprehensive manner is a challenge for the Editors. On the one hand, one needs to discourage encyclopedic reviews in order to focus on what is new – the prime motivation for highlighting various aspects of uterine

cancer. On the other hand, if one of the functions will be to become a handy reference on which to build the near future of therapeutics, all aspects of the foundations as well as of advancing science need to be included. In finally surveying the components that make up this new venture, we are hopeful that we have come close to our goals to emphasize new aspects while providing useful reference material.

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