

Preface

It took us a few years to get used to the words “interventional oncology.” Both of us have been using interventional radiological methods to treat patients with cancer for the whole of our careers. Over the years, technological advances such as the advent of metallic stents have greatly improved the effectiveness of what we do, prolonging the survival and improving the quality of life of patients with malignant disease. Therefore, as far as we were concerned, we were practising interventional oncology before this discipline had a name.

In recent years, the term *interventional oncology* has been applied to a set of potentially curative imaging-guided interventional radiological procedures. This is helpful, as the approach to the patients treated using these methods differs in some important respects from the way that interventional radiologists have managed oncology patients requiring palliative treatments such as biliary stenting. The interventional oncologist often assumes the role of the patient’s primary physician. It is necessary to explain not only the procedure being offered but also potential alternatives, such as surgery and chemotherapy, and to discuss these with the patient in some depth.

Another challenge facing the interventional oncologist is the pace of development in this field. A plethora of treatment methods has become available, and it is not easy to disentangle theoretical technical advances from substantive clinical advantages.

This book brings together some of the greatest experts in this field around the world. They are all extremely busy people, combining large clinical practices with high-flying academic careers. Most of them are personal friends of one or both of us, and we were shameless in using our friendship to recruit them as authors. Our excuse is the final outcome: this volume is an excellent account of the current state of interventional radiological methods of treating malignant tumors. We have enjoyed reading the chapters and have learned a lot from them. We are confident that our readers will find them equally useful.

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