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## Preface

Most surgical oncology textbooks are distillations of the current literature that guide us in treatment decisions and clinical practice. They are reliable, practical, and comprehensive pictures of where our field stands. But how do we push forward? Major unresolved questions persist in the oncologic world despite tremendous strides in recent years. How do we address these and continue our advancement?

Comparative effectiveness research (CER) is a relatively new name for an old concept. By the Institute of Medicine's definition, it is the synthesis of evidence that compares the benefits and harms of alternative methods to prevent, diagnose, treat, and monitor a clinical condition or to improve the delivery of care. Though randomized controlled trials function as our gold standard, we must often, for a variety of reasons, look to alternative CER techniques for answers. These approaches may include well-conducted retrospective cohort studies from cancer registries and other data sources, decision and cost-effectiveness analyses, and other novel methodologies.

This book lays out the current critical questions for a variety of solid-organ malignancies, identifies the barriers to obtaining high-level evidence, and proposes potential approaches to the fundamental questions of each disease.

We would like to recognize the creativity and expertise demonstrated by all of the authors. While other textbooks require an intimate knowledge of a particular malignancy, this book also required the authors to imagine solutions to the most fundamental questions in their field. We believe that it is this type of progressive thinking and research that will spur the evolution of surgical oncology.

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Comparative Effectiveness in Surgical Oncology

Key Questions and How to Answer Them

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