

# Preface

The great progress in cancer control could not have been possible without the single-minded focus on cancer, almost at exclusion of anything else. To control cancer, one should not be distracted by the side effects of treatment and often sheer physical and mental exhaustion that accompanies cancer and its treatment. Only by putting these aside, one can grasp a chance of changing the course of this terrible disease.

But as an oncologist who has treated patients for nearly a quarter of the century, I face the sobering truth that while the frontiers in the war against cancer are advancing every day, the lay of the land is defined by more than cancer alone. It takes a few years after the cancer diagnosis before one can embrace the joy of cancer survivorship, but also face the tragedy of long-standing consequences of cancer treatment, and the question of could have these been prevented? With more cancers becoming treatable and treatments better tolerated, we need to learn to better balance the benefits and risks of treatment in light of coexisting conditions that the patient is already dealing with.

As cancer is becoming a chronic condition itself and the prevalence of chronic conditions in the Western population at the all-time high, this book aims to answer some of the questions related to the interface of cancer and comorbidity that an oncology practitioners face every day—how does comorbidity impact on cancer treatment and its outcomes and how can we deliver better care that addresses both cancer and the comorbid conditions? In some cases, where evidence is not yet well established, the authors define questions as the basis for future research.

My thanks go to all the contributors of the book who brought with them tremendous diversity of perspectives and fields truly reflective of the complexity of the topic and who, through coming together in this project, serve as nidus of the multidisciplinary collaboration in this field.

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