Cancer Pain Management: Principles and Practice


Overall rating: Good
Strengths: Fairly comprehensive
Weaknesses: Some repetition. Coverage of systemic pharmacotherapy as related to anesthetic techniques could be better
Audience: Those managing patients with cancer pain

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lthough cancer is a common disease, many patients do not have their pain optimally managed. Fortunately, over the past 10 to 15 years, significant inroads have been made in dealing with this difficult problem.

This book attempts to cover the wide spectrum of cancer pain, including epidemiology, mechanisms, assessment, and general medical and original therapies. It also has sections on psychological, ethical and governmental issues. Many of these sections are reasonably detailed, with ample illustrations and tables. The major therapeutic focus of the book, however, is from an anesthesiologist’s point of view: there is a fairly strong emphasis on regional approaches (e.g., nerve blocks, invasive techniques).

Sections that could have received more detail include systemic pharmacotherapy (e.g., incident pain, addicts’ drugs to opiates, outpatient opiate infusions). And, although there is a chapter on slow-release opiates, there is no mention of some of the products now available in Canada, such as slow-release hydromorphine or morphine sulfate. Despite lack of adequate space to discuss some of these systemic approaches, it was curious that the editor chose, instead, to include chapters on nutrition (2), chest pain, morphine metabolites and the epidemiology of cancer in children.

Overall, however, this book is a good source of information on a wide spectrum of topics related to cancer pain, which would justify its inclusion in the library of professionals who deal with this problem.

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