**Head and Neck Cancer**

*B Brockstein and G Masters (eds)*

RRP: US$150.00

This book is part of the *Cancer treatment and research series* edited by Steven Rosen of Northwestern University Medical School, Chicago, USA. Approximately 40 titles in this series have been published over the past decade covering a range of topics and speciality areas related to cancer therapy and research.

The volume reviewed, *Head and Neck Cancer*, was edited by Bruce Brockstein and Gregory Masters, both from Evanston Northwestern Health Care and the Robert Lurie Cancer Centre of Northwestern University Chicago. The book has 370 pages and contains 15 chapters covering a range of topics including epidemiology staging and screening, oral pre-neoplasia and chemoprevention, the treatment of early and advanced stage head and neck cancer, modified fractionated radiotherapy and re-irradiation, organ preservation, the management of unresectable disease, new and novel therapies and quality of life. There are 29 contributing authors, including the editors, and a small number of the contributors are recognisable as having a high profile in the head and neck oncology community.

Overall the quality of the information presented in this relatively small book is high. It is important to point out however that the book does not attempt to be a comprehensive textbook on head and neck cancer. Rather its aim is to provide and “update” current treatment practices and research directions that are likely to be of interest to clinicians already working in the field of head and neck oncology or perhaps other general oncologists wishing to keep abreast of a speciality area with which they do not normally deal.

Despite the fact that multiple authors have contributed, the editors have done their job well since the writing, in general, is tight and the layout is compact. There is a relative paucity of illustrations and their quality is variable but this does not pose a significant problem. The strength of the book really lies in the breadth of coverage and the extent to which the literature, most of it relatively recent, has been reviewed. Some chapters have over 200 references, reflecting a high level of effort on the part of contributing authors.

As a practicing head and neck surgeon, this reviewer was critical of the depth of coverage of some clinical aspects of head and neck oncology but one must draw the conclusion that it was never the aim of the book to cover all areas comprehensively.

Of particular interest and benefit to this reviewer were chapters dealing with a pre-neoplasia and chemoprevention (chapter three), modified fractionation in radiotherapy (chapter seven), organ preservation with concomitant chemo/radiation (chapter nine), and the management of metastatic disease with chemotherapy and novel agents (chapter 12).

Importantly there is a very large amount of outcome data, all of which is well-referenced, while current research issues like viral oncogenesis, cancer genetics and molecular markers are introduced and covered succinctly and in a fashion that will not cause the non-academic reader to glaze over and go searching for the sports section of the newspaper.

This book is not necessarily for the residents or registrars in speciality training however clinicians doing a speciality fellowship in head and neck oncology will find it very useful, along with those already established in mainstream cancer practice.

*C O’Brien*
Sydney Cancer Centre
Sydney Head and Neck Cancer Institute
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown, NSW