Clinical Radiation Oncology 2nd Edition

Leonard L. Gunderson, Joel E. Tepper (Editors)
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The second edition of the classic text Clinical Radiation Oncology by Gunderson and Tepper was much anticipated by this reviewer and certainly did not disappoint. It is a completely revised and updated version of the original text with an emphasis on an evidence-based approach. While it is directed mainly at radiation oncologists and trainees, it is without doubt an invaluable reference resource for surgical and medical oncologists as well.

Featuring a multi-disciplinary perspective, it examines the role of single and combined modality treatment of specific disease sites. The format is clear and logical, with a consistent thread running through all chapters. Initial chapters deal with the scientific foundations of radiation oncology: radiobiology, physics, and radiation techniques and modalities. The physics chapter is especially well-written and provides an excellent overview of the various aspects of physics unique to different radiation modalities.

In addition, there are short chapters that deal with key concepts of surgical oncology, chemotherapy and the interactions between chemo and radiotherapy. The clinical units are divided into tumour specific chapters covering: the central nervous system, head and neck, thoracic, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, gynaecologic, and breast tumours; soft tissue sarcomas; childhood cancers; and lymphoma and haematologic malignancies. Each clinical unit is preceded by a short overview segment. While some might find this repetitive, this reviewer found these sections essential for students of the field to help place treatment principles in context and focus on fundamental concepts, despite the overwhelming amount of data one needs to assimilate. In this regard, the authors have to be commended for having clearly developed a rationale for treatment recommendations, which are based on key clinical trials for the respective fields. Suggested treatment algorithms are provided for each section, which are concise and invaluable, especially for rapid reference. Important aspects of pathology and radiology are also reviewed as necessary.

In short, the text is easy to read, user-friendly and practical in orientation rather than an esoteric, all-encompassing manual. The layout is logical and together with excellent indexing and full-colour design makes reference fast and easy. There is no doubt that it is a well-produced resource that should be read by all trainees and be part of every practicing radiation oncologists’ library.

Anu Thiagarajan, Department of Radiation Oncology, Westmead Hospital, Sydney, NSW.