Pediatric and Adolescent Osteosarcoma

edited by
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Springer
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Dedication

It is forbidden to live in a city where there is no physician.¹

To my patients and their parents for honoring me. They granted me the privilege to be their physician. Their serene fortitude was a paradigm of Trust, Hope and Courage. In their heroic struggles against a formidable enemy they taught me many lessons.

I give thanks to the Almighty for giving me life, strength and opportunity to see the completion of this task.

Norman Jaffe
Senior Editor

Preface

Why (Another) Symposium on Osteosarcoma?

Osteosarcoma serves as a prototype for the coordinated multidisciplinary treatment of malignancy. Therapy must be carefully integrated since occasionally tactics and strategies appear as opposing forces. This is not unexpected since not infrequently, the “correct” treatment is by no means established. A fundamental principle, however, is that the plan of management must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate changing circumstances.

Major advances have been forged in the management of osteosarcoma. These have been presented and discussed in many conferences and meetings. This monograph is a compilation of the presentations delivered at the osteosarcoma conference “Pediatric and Adolescent Osteosarcoma…Progress of the Past, Prospects for the Future” held at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, March 6–8, 2008.

The question may rightly be asked, “Why organize another Conference on Osteosarcoma?” Two significant reasons may be advanced:

1. This was the first conference devoted exclusively to pediatric and adolescent osteosarcoma.
2. Unfortunately, we have reached a plateau in the survival and therapeutic strategies of osteosarcoma. This unfavorable situation developed within a short period after the discovery of the majority of the chemotherapeutic agents that were effective in the treatment of osteosarcoma some 30–40 years ago. At that stage, a new era in treatment was considered to have emerged. However, since that time, no major advances have been discovered or reported to combat chemoresistant metastatic osteosarcoma cells. To breach the barrier, new concepts and therapies are required.

What is the solution?
The answer may possibly be derived from some ancient Talmudic advice.
Delve in it; delve in it for everything is in it.

Knowledge may be gleaned from repeatedly examining the past and possibly exposing fresh depths of unexpected meaning. To this end authorities were invited to review their past experiences and express opinions on the impact their results could have in creating new tactics and strategies for treatment. No attempt was made to disguise controversies or differences of opinion. By necessity some overlap was inevitable, but an attempt was made to keep it to a minimum.

Mindful that therapeutic research is dependent also upon plumbing the depths of uncharted waters, selected investigators were invited to present reports of their innovative studies. The task to explore the unknown is arduous but hopefully their efforts will be fruitful and be amply rewarded. Unfortunately, time constraints limited the number of investigators who could be invited to present their elegant results. To my colleagues in this category, I offer my sincere apologies.

Contributors were permitted wide berth in an effort to provide innovative opinions and concepts. It is my earnest hope that their presentations will stimulate provocative thought for the mind that invents and the hand that crafts.

The responsibility of weighing a decision, examining a controversy, and implementing treatment is assumed by the primary physician. He or she must serve as a patient’s anchor to windward and support their charge through a perilous journey. To alleviate their burden, it is hoped that the accumulated assistance derived from the experience of investigators in these diverse disciplines will be of assistance. It is in this spirit that I express a sense of deep gratitude to my distinguished colleagues and associate editors without whose help, prudent counsel, and expertise this effort would not have materialized.

The reward is proportional to the effort!

Houston, TX

Norman Jaffe

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