PROSTATE CANCER

Clinical and Scientific Aspects

— Bridging the Gap

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PROSTATE CANCER: CLINICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS

Bridging the Gap between Clinicians and Scientists

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Foreword

I am honoured and delighted to write an introduction to this book, which truly serves the purpose expressed in the title: it bridges the gap between clinical and basic science in the field of prostate cancer.

Mr. Abel and Professor Lalani have made a major and clearly successful effort to put together a text that provides important reading for basic scientists and clinicians interested in the field of prostate cancer. The purpose matches the result: the book serves to bring basic scientists and clinicians closer to each other in understanding the field. They will learn to speak each other's language and this should promote co-operation in an improved, more thoughtful and more directed fashion. This important goal is in line with European Union and national policies, which clearly identify translational research as the main area in which progress can and must be made. This process will require effort on both sides. The present book clearly makes a major contribution by identifying the gaps, pointing to ways out of miscommunication and to a future of better and more effective co-operation.

The editors have succeeded in bringing together much of the scientific avant-garde in this field. The extremely careful choice of subjects and authors has led to an international view on virtually all relevant clinical and basic scientific approaches and problems. The text also shows the growing British and European interest in taking a major research effort forward in the field of prostate cancer. The 38 chapters, split up in 5 thematic sections, provide comprehensive

reviews at the cutting edge of science in the field. Clearly, this book will be an important reference volume for a number of years to come.

The editors and authors are to be complemented for this volume which should bring attention to all those who are working or have a major interest in the field of prostate cancer.

Fritz H. Schröder
Rotterdam, 2003

Preface

In this century, the average life span of man is predicted to increase much beyond that already achieved in the last century. This change will have a major impact upon services provided by the state or purchased by individuals and includes for example, health care, education and pensions. Providing state-of-the art health care to all is, however, probably unachievable. One potentially positive way forward would be to fund translational research and bridge the gap between scientists (such as social, biological, environmental, population) and clinicians to translate discoveries in the “field” into effective sustainable interventions and treatments, reducing the burden of disease across all societies.

Prostate cancer is the commonest adenocarcinoma in men and an increasingly important international clinical problem. Mortality remains effectively unchanged in the past 100 years and advances in management since androgen deprivation therapy was introduced in the 1940’s have been few. This stands in marked contrast to the remarkable explosion of knowledge in the basic sciences. Why these contrasting successes should be so different is unclear but raises an important question, “What elements in the cycle of translation from bench to bedside are restricting the development of effective new diagnostic and therapeutic interventions for prostate cancer”? We suggest that there are several restriction points including lack of cross talk and networking, polarised approaches to research, territoriality, poor understanding of the natural history of the

disease and lack of funding/general support for translational research. These factors, along with the manner in which academic rewards and benefits are traditionally allocated appear to mitigate against collaboration.

This book is an attempt by like-minded individuals to address some of these challenges by bridging the gap between bench and bedside and help to overcome the restriction points. We have asked clinical and scientific colleagues to each explain their specialist areas for complementary colleagues — but specifically in a manner best suited to enhance understanding of often very complex areas. It is hoped that by improving knowledge outside our own individual areas of expertise, communication will be enhanced and collaborations increased to the ultimate benefit of patients.

We thank and acknowledge all those who have worked so hard with us in the production of this book.

P. D. Abel
E-N. Lalani

Imperial College
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March 2003

Bacon, Francis

The men of experiment are like the ant, they only collect and use; the reasoners resemble spiders, who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes the middle course: it gathers its material from the flowers of the garden and field, but transforms and digests it by a power of its own. Not unlike this is the true business of philosophy (science); for it neither relies solely or chiefly on the powers of the mind, nor does it take the matter which it gathers from natural history and mechanical experiments and lay up in the memory whole, as it finds it, but lays it up in the

understanding altered and digested. Therefore, from a closer and purer league between these two faculties, the experimental and the rational (such as has never been made), much may be hoped.

Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, Liberal Arts Press, Inc., New York, p 93. (5)

Szent-Györgyi, Albert (1893-1984) b. Hungary

Basic research may seem very expensive. I am a well-paid scientist. My hourly wage is equal to that of a plumber, but sometimes my research remains barren of results for weeks, months or years and my conscience begins to bother me for wasting the taxpayer's money. But in reviewing my life's work, I have to think that the expense was not wasted. Basic research, to which we owe everything, is relatively very cheap when compared with other outlays of modern society. The other day I made a rough calculation which led me to the conclusion that if one were to add up all the money ever spent by man on basic research, one would find it to be just about equal to the money spent by the Pentagon this past year.

Albert Szent-Györgyi, *The Crazy Ape*, Grosset and Dunlap, New York, 1971, p 72.

Contents

Foreword	xi
-----------------	-----------

Preface	xiii
----------------	-------------

Part 1 **Prostate Cancer:** **Bridging the Gap**

Chapter 1	
Prostate Cancer — Some Clinical and Scientific Dilemmas	3
<i>P.D. Abel and E-N. Lalani</i>	

Part 2 **Prostate Cancer:** **Epidemiology and Genetics**

Chapter 1	
The Epidemiology of Prostate Cancer	23
<i>D.T. Bishop</i>	
Chapter 2	
Genetic Aberrations in Prostate Tumours	35
<i>I.C. Gray and N.K. Spurr</i>	

Part 3 **Prostate Gland: Development, Differentiation and** **Pathology (in Relationship to Malignancy)**

Chapter 1	
Development and Differentiation of the Prostate Gland	71
<i>G.R. Cunha, A.A. Donjacour, S.W. Hayward, A.A. Thomson,</i> <i>R. Dahiya, P.C. Marker, C. Abate-Shen and M. Shen</i>	

Chapter 2	
Growth Factors in Prostatic Development	91
<i>A.A. Thomson, A.A. Donjacour, S.W. Hayward and G.R. Cunha</i>	

Chapter 3	
The Prostate and Cancer: An Introduction to Normal Morphology and Histopathology for Research Scientists	111
<i>C.C. Colville, J.R. Masters and M.C. Parkinson</i>	

Part 4

Molecular and Cell Biology of Prostate Cancer

Chapter 1	
Cell Lines as Models of Prostate Cancer	143
<i>S.E. Mitchell, J. Nightingale, P.D. Abel and E.-N. Lalani</i>	

Chapter 2	
Animal Models of Prostate Cancer	227
<i>D.M. Lubaroff and A. Acosta</i>	

Chapter 3	
Transgenic Mouse Models of Prostate Carcinoma: Anatomic, Histopathologic, and Molecular Considerations	245
<i>S.B. Shappell, N. Masumori, T. Thomas, T. Case, M. Paul, S. Kasper and R.J. Matusik</i>	

Chapter 4	
Androgen Regulated Gene Expression and Mutation of the Androgen Receptor	321
<i>J. Trapman</i>	

Chapter 5	
Ion Channels in Prostate Cancer	339
<i>M.E. Laniado, E.-N. Lalani and P.D. Abel</i>	

Chapter 6	
MHC Expression and Immune Mechanisms in Prostate Cancer	359
<i>D.R. Siemens and T.L. Ratliff</i>	
Chapter 7	
Growth Factors in Prostate Cancer	399
<i>D. Djakiew</i>	
Chapter 8	
Epithelial-Mesenchymal Interactions in Prostate Cancer	421
<i>S.E. Mitchell, P.D. Abel, E-N. Lalani and S.W. Hayward</i>	
Chapter 9	
Cell Adhesion Molecules in Genitourinary Cancer	455
<i>K. Tomita and J.A. Schalken</i>	
Chapter 10	
Matrix Metalloproteinases as Potential Targets for Prostate Cancer Therapy	473
<i>R.E. Hewitt and A.E. Yu</i>	
Chapter 11	
Role of the Bone Morphogenetic Protein Family and Their Receptors in Prostate Cancer Progression	493
<i>S.E. Harris, M.A. Harris, N.M. Greenberg, B. Foster, C.W. Gregory and F.S. French</i>	
Chapter 12	
Apoptosis and Cell Cycle Deregulation in Prostate Cancer	511
<i>E.M. Bruckheimer and N. Kyprianou</i>	
Chapter 13	
Oncogenes and Tumour Suppressor Genes in Prostate Cancer	551
<i>A. Bailey and A.F. Markham</i>	

Chapter 14	
Bcl-2 Family Proteins and Prostate Cancer Progression: Potential for Therapeutic Interventions	595
<i>K.S. Chaudhary, P.D. Abel and E-N. Lalani</i>	

Chapter 15	
Emerging Technologies and New Strategies in Prostate Cancer Research	619
<i>M. Ahram and M.R. Emmert-Buck</i>	

Part 5

New Perspectives in Prevention, Control and Clinical Management of Prostate Cancer

Chapter 1	
An Analysis of Methodology in Clinical Studies of Prostate Cancer: Misled and Misinterpreted	649
<i>P. Whelan</i>	

Chapter 2	
Prevention of Prostate Cancer	667
<i>K.B. Olson and K.J. Pienta</i>	

Chapter 3	
Screening for Prostate Cancer	683
<i>H.J. de Koning, M.-L. Essink-Bot and F.H. Schröder</i>	

Chapter 4	
Prognostic Markers in Prostate Cancer: Clinical Value	709
<i>A.F. West, H.Y. Leung and J.K. Mellon</i>	

Chapter 5	
Detection and Diagnosis of Prostate Cancer: The Role of PSA	769
<i>M. Chetner</i>	

Chapter 6	
The Molecular Staging of Prostate Cancer	793
<i>J.M. Wells, J. Lawry and F.C. Hamdy</i>	

Chapter 7	
The Clinical Management of Prostate Cancer — The Surgeon's Approach and Outcomes	811
<i>S.R. Potter and A.W. Partin</i>	
Chapter 8	
The Clinical Management of Prostate Cancer — The Medical Oncologist's Approach and Outcomes	833
<i>R. Dreicer</i>	
Chapter 9	
The Clinical Management of Prostate Cancer — The Radiation Oncologist's Approach and Outcomes	853
<i>V.S. Khoo</i>	
Chapter 10	
The Care of Patients with Advanced Hormone Relapsed Prostate Cancer	911
<i>S. Kraus and W. Weidner</i>	
Chapter 11	
The Biology and Treatment of Bone Metastases in Prostate Cancer	931
<i>N.W. Clarke and L. Scott</i>	
Chapter 12	
Prostate Cancer Gene Therapy	957
<i>N.R. Ramakrishna, S. Li, N. Detorie, J.W. Simons and T.L. DeWeese</i>	
Chapter 13	
Psychosocial Aspects of Prostate Cancer	1011
<i>K. Gannon, L. Glover and P.D. Abel</i>	
Chapter 14	
Psychosocial Support of the Prostate Cancer Patient	1039
<i>M.A. Burke, A. Krongrad, L. Granville, R.E. Perczek and C.W. Lowrance</i>	

Chapter 15	
Controversies in the Management Choices for the Treatment of Prostate Cancer: A Personal View as Surgeons	1097
<i>W. See, A. Smither and M. Denson</i>	
Chapter 16	
The Problems of Prostate Cancer in Developing Countries — An African Perspective	1123
<i>A.P. Danso</i>	
Chapter 17	
Prostate Cancer in South Central Asia: A Perspective from the Developing World	1131
<i>J. Talati and F. Abbas</i>	
About the Authors	1187
Index	1219