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TARGETED CANCER THERAPY

Edited by

Razelle Kurzrock, MD, FACP

Department of Investigational Cancer Therapeutics,
Division of Cancer Medicine,
The University of Texas,
MD Anderson Cancer Center,
Houston, TX

Maurie Markman, MD

Department of Clinical Research,
The University of Texas,
MD Anderson Cancer Center,
Houston, TX
Dedication

This book is dedicated to our courageous patients and their families engaged in the war against cancer.
Based on experience with a small number of cancers, it is now apparent that remarkable responses (without serious side effects) can be achieved by targeted therapy—that is, by using drugs that directly affect the molecular abnormality that characterizes a tumor. The era of personalized medicine in cancer has begun, and we believe that these early therapeutic successes represent just the tip of the iceberg. No longer a “one-size-fits-all” approach, the treatment of cancer is now increasingly being individualized based on an understanding of the underlying biologic mechanisms.

The limitations of chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and surgery are apparent and have been the impetus for developing targeted therapies. Novel emerging technologies in target identification, drug discovery, molecular markers, and imaging are rapidly changing the face of cancer. Personalized health planning, early diagnosis, and selecting optimal drugs for each patient with predictable side effects are developments that are directly in our sights. It is also becoming increasingly important to develop combinations of therapies and therapeutic modalities for treating cancer, as many cancers are complex and driven by more than one aberration. A primary objective is to design drug combinations that can overcome drug resistance. Cross talk among signaling pathways and parallel pathways that contribute to tumor pathogenesis is thought to contribute to single-agent resistance.

We are poised to change the landscape in oncology. The purpose of Targeted Cancer Therapy is to provide a state-of-the-art overview of where we are now in this process. We hope that the book will provide a foundation of knowledge in targeted cancer therapeutics that is useful to practicing and academic physicians, fellows, residents, and students, as well as basic scientists who are interested in the cancer field.

Razelle Kurzrock, MD, FACP
Maurie Markman, MD
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Contributors

RAYMOND ALEXANIAN, MD • Department of Lymphoma, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
LUIS H. CAMACHO, MD, MPH • Department of Investigational Cancer Therapeutics, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
LAKSHMI CHINTALA, MD • Department of Investigational Cancer Therapeutics, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
JORGE CORTESES, MD • Department of Leukemia, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
BARBARA S. CRAFT, MD • Department of Investigational Cancer Therapeutics, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
MICHAEL DAVIES, MD, PhD • Department of Melanoma Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
ELIHU ESTEY, MD • Department of Leukemia, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
GUILLERMO GARCIA-MANERO, MD • Department of Leukemia, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
DON L. GIBBONS, MD, PhD • Department of Hematology and Oncology (T/C), UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
DAVID HONG, MD • Department of Investigational Cancer Therapeutics, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
ELIAS JABBOUR, MD • Department of Stem Cell Transplantation, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
EDWARD F. JACKSON, MS, PhD • Department of Imaging Physics, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
ERIC JONASCH, MD • Department of Genitourinary Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
HAGOP KANTARJIAN, MD • Department of Leukemia, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
MICHEAL J. KEATING, MD • Department of Leukemia, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
JERI KIM, MD • Department of Genitourinary Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
KEVIN B. KIM, MD • Department of Melanoma Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
SCOTT KOPETZ, MD • Department of Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
VIKAS KUNDRA, MD, PhD • Department of Diagnostic Radiology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
RAZELLE KURZROCK, MD, FACP • Department of Investigational Cancer Therapeutics, Division of Cancer Medicine, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
JOSEPH LUDWIG, MD • Department of Sarcoma Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
MAURIE MARKMAN, MD, VP • Department of Clinical Research, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
STACY MOULDER, MD, MSC • Department of Breast Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
SUNIL PATEL, MD • Department of Medical Oncology (T/C), UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
GARTH POWIS, PHD • Department of Experimental Therapeutics, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
ALFONSO QUINTÁS-CARDAMA, MD • Department of Hematology and Oncology (T/C), UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
DAWID SCELINGERHOUT, MD • Department of Diagnostic Radiology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
DAVID J. STEWART, MD, FRCP • Department of Thoracic Head/Neck Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
NIZAR TANNIR, MD • Department of Genitourinary Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
JONATHAN C. TRENT, MD, PHD • Department of Sarcoma Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
APOLOGIA-MARIA TSIMBERIDOU, MD, PHD • Department of Leukemia Research, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
GAURI VARADHACHARY, MD, MBBS • Department of Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
MICHAEL WANG, MD, MS • Department of Lymphoma, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
JOHN F. WARD, MD • Department of Urology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
AMANDA WEDGEWOOD, MSN, RN, CNS • Department of Lymphoma, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
SARAH J. WELSH, BM, BCh, PhD • University of Oxford, Harris Manchester College, Oxford, UK
JENNIFER WHEELER, MD • Department of Investigational Cancer Therapeutics, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
ROBERT A. WOLFF, MD • Department of Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
ANAS YOUNES, MD • Department of Lymphoma, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
YUHONG ZHOU, MD • Department of Medical Oncology, Zhongshan Hospital, Fudan University, Shanghai, Peoples Republic of China
AMADO J. ZURITA, MD • Department of Genitourinary Medical Oncology, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX