Epidemiology of Prostate Disease
Most physicians spend their time working and thinking about the diagnosis and treatment of diseases which occur in their individual patients. So it is not surprising that the main subject at urological meetings over the past decade has been the diagnosis and treatment of prostate disease. This situation is likely to continue into the next millennium. Controversy as to the best methods of treating prostate disease is intense as proposals are put forward to rethink apparently firmly established methods of diagnosis and treatment and replace them with new procedures. Important contributions to this debate are now being made by the increasing number of epidemiologists who have taken an interest in prostate disease in recent years.

As a practising urologist, I seldom get the opportunity to look beyond the clinical picture of disease, so it was particularly enjoyable for me to participate in an International Symposium on the Epidemiology of Prostate Disease, which was held in the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, in April 1994. This book, *Epidemiology of Prostate Disease* is a synthesis of the various contributions made by the international experts who participated in the symposium. As the pace of clinical and laboratory research into the best means of managing and treating prostate disease gathers speed, it will serve us well in the future to stand back for a moment and look, through the medium of epidemiological investigations, at the burden of prostate disease in communities. The impact on the men who suffer as well as the implications for health care to cope with prostate disease can only be elicited through this epidemiological approach.

I commend the *Epidemiology of Prostate Disease* to you as an excellent way of obtaining an appreciation of our current state of knowledge about the aetiology, frequency, distribution, natural history and prevention of this increasingly important group of diseases.

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Preface

Prostate disease is now a major public health problem. The frequency of prostate cancer is increasing rapidly in many parts of the world, and the prevalence of clinical prostatism is now known to be considerably higher than previously reported. It is timely to bring together for the first time in one volume the underlying facts about prostate disease, presented as reviews of the important epidemiological features of these diseases.

The increased interest in epidemiological research into prostate disease over the past few years has come about through a combination of different forces and interests. These include a substantial disparity between treatment needs of prostate disease and demand for health services, which have been increasing. The emergence of new treatment modalities allied to a lack of consensus on the best clinical management for prostate disease is an increasing challenge to many practitioners. The lack of a proper scientific evaluation of many treatments is becoming increasingly clear, particularly important in the context of financial resource implications for the future management of prostate disease. Public perception of urinary dysfunction is changing, the dissemination of information about prostate disease in the lay press is increasing, and it has become socially more acceptable to address male urinary problems just as the stigma of menopausal symptoms raised in women has now been laid to rest. Just as hormone replacement therapy has enabled large numbers of women to obtain menopausal symptom relief, the expectations are that new treatment modalities for prostate disease may play a similar role in men’s health in the coming years. Finally, populations in most developed countries have been “ageing” over the past two or three decades, bringing much larger numbers of men into the age span when prostate disease presents most frequently.

The book provides overviews, analyses and summaries of a great deal of the recent research work which has been improving our insight into the epidemiology of prostate disease. This information needs to be disseminated to urologists in order to allow them the opportunity to provide the optimum level or type of
care for their patients. Faced with a wider choice of options for the investigation, diagnosis and management of prostate disease over the past few years, they appreciate that it is impossible to accurately select patients with prostate disease for a particular treatment until an understanding of the underlying pattern of the natural history of prostate disease is known. This book should help to achieve this goal. It will also provide a comprehensive guide of the underlying facts about prostate disease for general practitioners, who will increasingly become involved with hospital clinicians in “shared care” of the increasing number of their male patients who will consult them about prostate disease in future years.

The contents of the book are largely based on a symposium held by the University of Edinburgh at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh on April 22–23, 1994. The meeting was sponsored by an educational grant from Merck, Sharp and Dohme, Human Health Division, which allowed urologists and scientists from around the world to present their work and participate in discussions about the way forward.

Thanks are due to Dr. Harry Guess, Senior Epidemiologist, Merck, Sharp and Dohme, whose interest in supporting the symposium was aroused and quickly turned into practical support. Jonathan Porter, Merck, Sharp and Dohme, Human Health Division, provided support in the organisation of the symposium and subsequent encouragement to bring the book to fruition. My thanks are due to the many contributors to the symposium from around the world for the time and effort made in attending and converting their papers into the written word. I acknowledge a debt to the publishers and authors, who have agreed to the reproduction of previously published material which has been incorporated into relevant contributions to this book. Anne Cocallis has provided administrative and secretarial support, and I am grateful to Ms. Marga Botsch, Springer-Verlag, whose experienced eye has guided me around the pitfalls of editorship.

Edinburgh, February 1995

M. GARRAWAY
Contents

Nature and Resource Implications of Prostate Disease

1 Anatomy and Pathophysiology of the Prostate Gland
   R.S. Kirby .................................. 3

2 Hormonal Influences on the Prostate Gland
   F.K. Habib .................................. 13

3 Use of Health Care Resources in Prostate Disease
   N.A. Black .................................. 22

Epidemiological Measurements in Prostate Disease

4 Symptom Questionnaires in Epidemiological Studies of Prostate Disease
   P. Abrams ................................... 33

5 Uroflowmetry in Epidemiological Studies of Prostate Disease: Some Critical Considerations
   K.M.-E. Jensen ................................ 42

6 The Role of Transrectal Ultrasound in Epidemiological Studies of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
   G.N. Collins .................................. 52

7 Prostate-Specific Antigen and Detecting Early Prostate Cancer: The Importance of Race and Patient Age
   J.E. Oesterling ................................ 67

Inflammatory Disease of the Prostate

8 Inflammatory Disease of the Prostate: Frequency and Pathogenesis
   W. Weidner and H.-G. Schiefer ............... 85
Contents

9 The Natural History and Treatment of Prostatitis
   T.B. HARGREAVE ........................................... 94

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia

10 Aetiological Factors in Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
   S. SHEPHERD ............................................. 107

11 The Prevalence of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
   in Population Surveys
   H.A. GUESS ............................................. 121

12 Natural History
   of Untreated Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
   M.J. BARRY .............................................. 132

13 Surgical Treatment of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia:
   Emergence of Alternatives
   G.D. CHISHOLM .......................................... 145

14 Impact of Prostatectomy on the Natural History
   of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
   M. JØNLER, R.C. BRUSKEWITZ, D.J. REDA,
   and J.H. WASSON ...................................... 153

15 Impact of Medical Intervention
   on the Natural History
   of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
   E. STONER ............................................... 165

16 Impact of New Technologies on the Natural History
   of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
   J. FITZPATRICK ....................................... 177

Cancer of the Prostate

17 Epidemiological Importance of the Genetic Evolution
   and Pathogenesis of Prostate Cancer
   M.M. LIEBER ............................................. 185

18 The Rise in Prostate Cancer: Myth or Reality?
   F.E. ALEXANDER and P. BOYLE ......................... 192

19 Aetiology of Prostate Cancer
   P. BOYLE, F.E. ALEXANDER, L. LUCHINI,
   and T. BISHOP ......................................... 202
20  Prognosis and Survival in Prostate Cancer
A. Gould, C.S. Muir, and L. Sharp ............... 214

21  Natural History in Untreated Prostate Cancer
J.-E. Johansson ................................ 225

22  Impact of Therapy on Adenocarcinoma
of the Prostate
B.J. Miles ....................................... 239

23  Screening for Prostate Cancer: Background
M. Fulton ........................................ 248

24  Screening for Prostate Cancer: Practical Aspects
F.H. Schröder ..................................... 256

25  Management of Prostate Disease: The Future
J.E. Altwein ........................................ 266

Subject Index ................................ 275
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