

Cancer: Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis (5th edn)
Edited by Juan A del Regato/Harlan J Spjut
C V Mosby 1977

Pp 1013. Price £41.20

This is the fifth edition of a comprehensive and well referenced textbook on cancer. Since the first edition (edited by Ackerman and del Regato) appeared in 1947 knowledge of fundamental cancer mechanisms has grown explosively. The book begins with six general chapters dealing with research (written by Michael Shimkin), pathology and surgery (by Alfred Ketcham), and radiotherapy and chemotherapy (by Montague Lane). There follows a series of sections on cancers of the various body systems and a separate chapter on Hodgkin's disease. The approach is essentially anatomical and histopathological rather than physiological or mechanistic. The presentation is textbookish and non-discursive.

Most of the opinions expressed in the book are pitched at the tactical rather than the strategic level. An exception to this is one of Montague Lane's conclusions with regard to chemotherapy: "Active and aggressive treatment of patients with disseminated cancer offers the prospects of palliation of symptoms, partial or complete remission of disease, and, occasionally, cure. These results, often achieved at considerable toxic, financial, and emotional expense, have stimulated concern for the total care of the cancer patient and reinforced the philosophy that greater benefits can be provided to patients at all stages of their disease through multi-disciplinary collaboration."

This volume is intended for medical students and physicians in training and will be of value to them, particularly because of its comprehensive nature. Over 800 illustrations of good quality help to justify its price.

Francis J C Rox