Introduction to the Symposium on Neoplastic Hematology and Medical Oncology

Each year, Mayo Clinic Proceedings publishes numerous high-impact articles on neoplastic hematology and medical oncology. These articles include original research, reviews, and consensus statements to guide best clinical practices. The Journal has also recently highlighted the increasing cost of cancer drugs, a pressing problem that is of great concern in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Between 2005 and 2008, the Proceedings published a series of 34 review articles as part of a symposium on hematologic malignancies and solid tumors. The high interest in this symposium led us in 2007 to expand the Proceedings’ controlled print circulation to include more than 8000 practicing hematologists and oncologists, and these specialists continue to comprise a considerable fraction of the Proceedings’ current print circulation of approximately 127,000.

As expected, the diagnosis and treatment of cancer has continued to evolve rapidly since the publication of the last symposium. There have been dramatic changes in the treatment of several malignant neoplasms, and since 2010, several new drugs have received approvals or accelerated approvals for use in cancer by the US Food and Drug Administration. For example, notifications of newly approved drugs were released by the Food and Drug Administration in 2010, 19 in 2011, 24 in 2012, 19 in 2013, 19 in 2014, and 8 so far in 2015. The indications for these approvals range from first-in-class drugs for the treatment of cancer to medications that offer control of disease-related symptoms and adverse effects from drug toxicity. The breathtaking pace of these changes has made it almost impossible for the practitioner to keep up with the associated medical literature. To what exact extent these recent advancements have made an impact in the decreasing death rate from cancer in both men and women is not entirely clear but should become apparent in the immediate future.

In view of these advances in cancer treatment, we have designed a new Symposium on Neoplastic Hematology and Medical Oncology to provide a state-of-the-art perspective on the diagnosis and management of cancer. The symposium will consist of approximately 24 authoritative review articles focused on the diagnosis and management of various cancers and will be published over the next 2 years. To ensure the highest quality of editorial content, we have invited as authors some of the most respected experts on each malignant disease. Each article in this symposium is peer reviewed and will provide evidence-based recommendations.

The first collection of articles will focus on hematologic malignancies, while the second half of the symposium will be devoted to solid tumors. In most of these cancers, we have witnessed major changes in several aspects including diagnostic criteria, molecular pathogenesis and classification, and approaches to therapy. Many of these changes have occurred in the past decade, and they continue to increase the complexity of neoplastic disease knowledge. These symposium review articles will discuss and define for the hematologist-oncologist and other practitioners of medicine the recent advances in cancer therapy, including the use of monoclonal antibodies alone or in combination with chemotherapeutic regimens, targeted small molecule agents, immunologic approaches, and radiopharmaceuticals. The goal of the symposium is to ensure that what sometimes appears to be an overwhelming amount of new and often contradictory data is put into perspective by authors who have been carefully selected not only because of their research contributions and expertise but also based on their recognized ability to distill information into useful knowledge that is of meaningful clinical value.
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REFERENCES