

Book Review

Jong Park, PhD

From the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, Tampa, Florida.

Graham A. Colditz, Cynthia J. Stein. *Handbook of Cancer Risk Assessment and Prevention*. Jones and Bartlett Publishers; 2004. 343 pages. Paperback, \$39.95 US.

The authors of this handbook offer healthcare providers a variety of tools and strategies for preventing cancer and for lowering our patients' cancer risk. Because the general public is continually exposed to conflicting health messages from the media, we need access to reliable, up-to-date information on cancer prevention and risk. This book is designed to help us understand more about these topics. We can rely on the information provided in this book to answer patient questions, assess individual risk, and recommend lifestyle changes to prevent cancer and other chronic diseases. This handbook is divided into four main sections.

Section I reviews cancer risk and risk communication. It provides information about relative risk without using medical jargon and offers advice on effectively discussing strategies for prevention with patients.

Section II is the main body of this book, consisting of 14 chapters that focus on a different type of cancer. For easy reference, the chapters are arranged in alphabetical order according to cancer site, and each chapter provides a summary of risk factors, a risk assessment tool for patients, and methods to promote lifestyle changes to reduce cancer risk.

Section III is composed of 5 chapters on behavioral factors that affect not only cancer risk, but also the risk of other diseases: *Tobacco Prevention and Cessation*, *Weight Control*, *Physical Activity*, *Diet and Alcohol*, and *Cancer Screening*. Additionally, each chapter contains information to help in discussing behavior change, such as the following: *Recommendations to Patients*, *Benefits of Behavior Change*, *Methods of Counseling*, and *Overcoming Barriers*.

Section IV includes risk assessment tools for each of the 14 cancers described in Section II. A brief questionnaire is provided that can be used to help identify a patient's areas of risk and methods of risk reduction.

This book is useful not only to healthcare providers but also to the general population. Teachers and graduate students will benefit from the well-organized gold mine of current information.

One surprising discovery is that liver cancer is not among the 14 major cancer categories described in the book. According to recent cancer statistics, liver cancer is

the 6th most common cancer and the 3rd most common cause of cancer death throughout the world. Liver cancer is much more common in developing societies.

In summary, this book surpasses expectations. Its strengths are the straightforward language and simple format. Most of the content can be understood without having to refer to a medical dictionary. However, the authors have provided a well-organized glossary. Also, rather than providing traditional references, which are usually listed in alphabetical or numerical order, the authors have provided the sources as a list of key words.

Over 50% of all cancers in the United States could theoretically be prevented. This handbook is a practical guide for healthcare providers that can help make this possible.