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Book Review

Limb Salvage—Major Reconstructions in Oncologic and Nontumoral Conditions

Edited by F. Langlais and B. Tomeno.

Berlin, Springer, 1991. 826 pp. ISBN 3-540-52861-X, 0-387-52861-X.

THIS BOOK brings together the papers presented at the 5th International Symposium on Limb Salvage held in St Malo in 1989.

The symposium was divided into 11 sections; the total number of presentations was 105. The sections concern allograft; innovative materials and devices; soft tissue and bone transfer in limb salvage; prostheses: long term follow-up and effect of adjuvant treatments; innovative prostheses; composite prostheses and soft tissue reattachments; failures of prostheses; limb salvage in paediatric surgery; innovative procedures; metastases and imaging.

As an introduction to the St Malo Symposium, the latter served as a field trial for a radiological implant evaluation system, a necessary prerequisite to enable those involved in the management of these cases to comprehensively discuss their individual experiences and techniques. This evaluation system will be refined as more clinical experience is gained and cases are added, this being a necessary evolution of any clinical classification.

It will be appreciated that this symposium comprehensively reviewed the "state of the art" of limb salvage in oncological and nontumoral conditions in 1989. Gone are the days of limb amputation in conditions other than those where vascular insufficiency or overwhelming infection dictates otherwise. The technology of both allograft and inorganic prostheses were fully discussed from both a research and clinical viewpoint. The presentation, illustrations and references are of a high standard.

Nevertheless, I have for many years had a reservation about the publication of the proceedings of international meetings. Maybe such publications do have a place on the library shelf. They provide a point of reference, albeit occasionally somewhat out of date, for further reading and research. However, I feel that the presumed cost of this volume, together with the fact that the original papers were presented 3 years ago, makes it of limited value. Up-to-date papers on specific topics of interest to the individual may be obtained from current journals at considerably less cost. I would be surprised if this book finds a place on the library shelf of many individuals other than those who contributed to the symposium.

Nicholas M. Breach
 Consultant Surgeon

Head and Neck/Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
 Royal Marsden Hospital
 Fulham Road
 London SW3 6JJ
 U.K.

News

The Information Industry in Europe

This item aims to provide non-information professionals with a picture of the European information network in the belief that the biomedical community should be aware of current innovations and related problems.

There are approximately 5000 information databases worldwide (excluding videotext mode) and while Europe is beginning to catch up with America—who largely dominate this field—reasons for resistance are similar to those hindering the formation of a single European market. At least 12 languages are spoken throughout Europe and each country has centuries of deeply entrenched traditions that are not easily blended into political unity.

Although Europe is one of the primary sources of scientific, technical and business information, European users are accustomed to turning to American online sources even to gain access to European-produced information.

The limitations imposed by the Common Market prevent adoption of the relatively low tariffs commonly found in the USA, where the sheer size of the market makes spreading the cost of overheads a possibility.

Supply fragmentation often curbs the use of European online sources by forcing the potential user to stipulate multiple contracts and pay in several currencies.

In addition, the number of languages required to gain access to the various databases poses an additional problem, even though intelligent networks (which 'translate' the language spoken by the user into that used by the host computer) are becoming increasingly popular.

The European Community Information Market Observatory (IMO) working papers [1] have discussed several interesting facts in this regard:

—By the end of 1989 there were 1048 databases produced in Europe vs. the 2214 produced in the USA (again, videotext excluded). 34% of these databases were produced in the UK.

—One in nine databases produced within the EC is not distributed within the Community, but exported to host computers in the USA and a further 70 countries.

—The EC essentially produces reference databases (bibliographic), whereas the American production is dominated by full-text databases that constitute the most attractive segment of the market.

—Although the EC produces a larger number of bibliographic databases (319) than the USA (285), it produces a smaller number of bibliographic records (69 vs. 187 million, respectively).

—European database producers are largely non-profit making organisations, whereas in the USA they are mostly for-profit.

—Most EC databases are professional services and do not target the general public as in the USA. The eight largest host organisations are American.



The European School of Oncology

1993 FORTHCOMING EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

4th - 5th March

Seminar: Site: Venice, Italy

Aids-related Tumours

S. Monfardini (IT), C. Gisselbrecht (FR)

4th - 6th March

Training Course: Site: Athens, Greece

Medical Oncology

L. Boutis (GR)

26th - 27th March

Seminar: Site: Venice, Italy

Minimal Residual Disease: Detection and Management

G. Stevenson (GB), T. Hamblin (GB)

8th - 10th April

Training Course: Site: Athens, Greece

Cancer Nursing

G. Assimakopoulos (GR)

13th - 16th April

Training Course: Site: Moscow, CIS

Head and Neck Cancer

V. Shental (CIS)

19th - 21st April

Residential Course: Site: Orta San Giulio, Italy

An Introduction to Biology for Clinicians

A. Horwich (GB)

19th - 24th April

Training Course: Site: Vienna, Austria

Paediatric Oncology

P. Voute (NL), H. Gadner (AT), D. Schuler (HU)

28th - 30th April

Training for non-oncologists: Site: Venice, Italy

Secretaries in Oncology

L. Minnen (BE)

26th - 30th April

Training Course: Site: Vienna, Austria

Breast Cancer

U. Veronesi (IT), C. Zielinski (AT)

3rd - 7th May

Residential Course: Site: Orta San Giulio, Italy

Chest Tumours

H. Hansen (DK)

6th - 7th May

Training Course: Site: New York, USA

Controversies in Breast Cancer

D. Kinne (US), U. Veronesi (IT)

10th - 11th May

Seminar: Site: Venice, Italy

Gynaecological and Breast Tumours: Diagnostic and Prognostic Factors

A. Weger (SE), P. van Diest (NL), J. Lindholm (SE)

12th - 18th May

Training Course: Site: Moscow, CIS

Oesophageal Cancer

M. Davydov (CIS)

17th - 21st May

Residential Course: Site: Orta San Giulio, Italy

Gynaecological Oncology

N. Einhorn (SE), J. Vermorken (NL)

For Residential Courses held in Italy, the registration fee is 650 ECU.

For Seminars held in Italy, the registration fee is 400 ECU.

For further information contact:

The Secretariat, European School of Oncology,

Via Venezian 18, 20133 Milan, Italy

Tel: (+ 39 2)70635923-2364283 Fax: (+ 39 2)2664662

Europe has invested heavily over the last few years however, and has gained positions in relative terms. The market is growing at an overall rate of 20% per year thanks to the success of the three main media for information distribution: online access, portable databases (CD-ROM) and videotext systems.

To meet the new demands of the information market, the EC has launched the IMPACT program (Information Market Policy Actions) aiming for the creation of a common market of information services and outlines the major obstacles to the European expansion.

The European Commission Host Organisation (ECHO) was created in 1980 in order to demonstrate the possibilities and cost-effectiveness of distant-independent tariff and easy access to electronic databases. The majority of ECHO's services are multilingual and therefore largely eliminate language barriers.

ECHO's main functions are:

- To provide database services (Research and Development, Language Industry, Industry and Economy, User Support).
- Database awareness activities.
- Demonstrating advanced access to information services.

The EC is therefore implementing a vast program for the development of a European service market for automated information handling. The clinical and research sectors may still be largely unaware of these developments.

C. Lombardo

L. Santi

National Institute for Cancer Research
Genoa
Italy

D. Ugolini

University of Genoa
Italy

M. Willem

European Commission Host Organization
Luxembourg

1. IMO Working Papers 90/4-5 rev. 1. Commission of the European Communities, 1990.

Report on the Third WHO Workshop on National Cancer Control Policy Development, Vienna, Austria, 10-12 June 1992

The 29 countries and the major European cancer organisations reinforced the need for National Cancer Control Policy as a framework for national planning and implementation of cancer control. This included control of exposure to increasing cancer risks, in particular to tobacco; public information and education; education and training of health professionals in every aspect of cancer control; screening programmes; cancer patient management, including palliative care and pain relief; statistical information systems; clinical, epidemiological and basic research and evaluation—all based on good quality control. All of these are becoming recognised as essential components of national, as well as Common European Cancer Policy. It was agreed that national policy on prevention—because of its multisectoral and political implications—is particularly fruitful as a starting point for further collaboration and cooperation. The background

papers prepared by WHO suggested the meeting undertake a wide-ranging review of present problems in cancer prevention and discussion of a framework around which these could be implemented. Indeed, the papers presented by the participants did achieve this aim. The representatives of all countries felt the need for practical recommendations they could support which would confer maximum benefit on their countries. There was, for the first time at such a meeting, an overwhelming expression of the urgent need to further support the fight against tobacco. This was seen as the one single action which would produce, more than any others, the greatest reduction in morbidity and mortality from cancer. The representatives supported removal of the barriers to successful implementation of anti-tobacco policy in government, parliament, the tobacco industry, the health services and education. Indeed, education of school children, young adults and the public in general. However, the medical and other health professionals across the whole field of cancer control in particular, were seen as the major route to progress. Such education needed to be soundly based, its importance recognised and its implementation rewarded. The arguments for this strategy were those in favour of health gains as well as health care. Each has a cost which should be determined by economic appraisal, resource management and quality control. These strategies are particularly important in the countries of central and eastern Europe, where mortality from the cancers caused by cigarette smoking are rising under the age of 65; the prevalence of cigarette smoking is increasing and the tobacco industry regards these countries as new and profitable markets. The representatives considered and approved the statement of the major European cancer organisations who had decided on a major commitment to the campaign against tobacco independent of political considerations. The meeting concluded that an explicitly stated policy and action plan on cancer prevention should be demanded from the governments of all member states. The meeting endorsed the following consensus statement:

Representatives of member countries agree to obtain the support of their medical communities to ensure their governments' participation in a comprehensive anti-tobacco programme based on sound information and good education. The key elements of such a programme include a number of actions more appropriate in some countries than others.

Specifically the programme is to include legislation on:

- (i) Banning direct and indirect tobacco advertising (including sponsorship and advertising at the point of sale).
- (ii) Introduction or addition of a pricing policy.
- (iii) Restriction of the use of tobacco in public places.
- (iv) Reduction of the tar content to or below EC level.

The representatives further endorsed the WHO's Active Plan for a Tobacco-free Europe, the immediate Legislation Proposals (UICC Tobacco-free Europe Conference Kazimierz, Poland 1990) and Cancer Prevention in Europe recommendations (OEI, Moscow, 1991). The representatives also endorsed Declaration of the European Forum of Medical Associations and WHO on Tobacco, Basle, 1992.

Additional points raised by participants included:

- (a) Recognition of the role of all members of the primary health care team in (cancer) prevention programmes; advice by family doctors on behavioural changes, on smoking