

Radiation Toxicity: A Practical Guide

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This comprehensive review provides a framework for considering normal radiation toxicities encountered by radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, oncology nurses, and radiation therapists in the practice of radiation oncology. The book is organized by organ system into 8 chapters describing the mechanisms of radiation damage (with basic science data if available), the acute and late manifestation of radiation toxicity, and the prevention and management of radiation toxicity. Most chapters offer a thorough and thoughtful review of the literature even when only scarce data are available for some topics, and the authors should be commended for their efforts and commitment to excellence.

The chapters vary slightly in their hierarchical presentation of the material, as is justifiable given the differences in the available data for each topic. Certain topics are presented in more than one chapter. Esophageal toxicity is presented in chapters 3 (thorax) and 5 (gastrointestinal tract), mandibular radionecrosis is presented in chapters 2 (head and neck) and 7 (skeleton), and femoral head and neck injury is presented in chapters 6 (pelvis) and 7 (skeleton). Though there is some overlap, the different chapters place a

different emphasis on the same topic, and each chapter itself can probably serve as a complete review of the topic.

Three of the topics could have been covered in greater depth: cardiac morbidity, second malignancy, and pediatric-specific issues. Cardiac morbidity and second malignancy are briefly covered in chapter 4, in the section on radiation toxicity from breast radiation. There is a section on pediatric growth abnormalities in chapter 7 (skeleton). However, more comprehensive coverage of these topics would have made the book more complete. Other minor topics I would have liked to see covered in greater depth are the eyes and optic apparatus, the pituitary gland, the thyroid gland, and the pancreas.

I found the book overall to be succinct and easily readable. It provides a quick but thorough review of most topics relevant to radiation toxicity. Particularly helpful for anyone involved in patient care will be the section, in each chapter, on management of complications.

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