
FOREWORD

As a practicing cancer physician, I find my patients often come to their appointments with a sheaf of papers downloaded from the Internet, seeking guidance. John Boik's previous book, *Cancer and Natural Medicine*, is dog-eared because it has been a constant source of information in my own practice. I am delighted to add his new book, *Natural Compounds in Cancer Therapy*, to my shelf; it deserves to be included in the personal reference library of every researcher and cancer doctor. But most of all, it is my hope this book will be read by every cancer patient interested in including natural compounds in his or her treatment.

Cancer patients and cancer physicians are two sides of a single coin: we share similar hopes and dilemmas. Patients hope to be cured of cancer without paying an unbearable price; doctors hope to cure the cancer without harming the patient. Understandably, cancer patients want to survive not only the disease but also the treatment, without loss of function or quality of life. The dilemma, of course, is that when you blast cancer with the big guns of modern Western medicine, little may be left standing after the smoke clears.

Faced with dismaying treatment options, it is no wonder that horrified patients turn to alternative therapies. Unfortunately, in seeking to educate themselves, they find information that is unscientific, disorganized, or biased by media or commercial hype. That is why everyone should welcome this book; it is honest, scientific, it organizes the available information, and it fills a huge need—for patients, doctors, researchers, and everyone concerned with better treatments for cancer.

As its starting point, this groundbreaking book adopts the scientific approach. Scientists and physicians demand proof that alternative treatments work, and the book adheres to the scientific accountability necessary to satisfy these demands. This approach is also important for patients because it helps them see cancer as a multifaceted process, not a sole event. Boik shows us why each part of the process is a potential target for treatment, and why all parts will be inhibited most effectively when combinations of compounds are used. In other words, instead of looking for a single magic bullet to cure cancer, we would do well to consider that a holster full of carefully chosen ones might produce the greatest good. Overall, this book is unique in integrating basic information on molecular biology with clinical targets for cancer therapy, and will be of use to anyone wanting to understand either.

In addition to the scientific information it provides, the book makes a crucial contribution by drawing a clear, organized picture of what we know so far about natural compounds. Today, doctors and patients alike have to sort through an overwhelming bombardment of information on both natural and traditional cancer therapies. Boik gives us an extremely valuable overview of what is known and what remains to be learned. The use of natural compounds in cancer therapy is a field still in its infancy, as he states, but publication of this book is a huge step forward.

For the patient, this book addresses the hype in the lay media about the merits of natural compounds and counters it with solid, scientific information. It emphasizes the scientific rationale for a multipronged approach and provides an organized starting point for a team effort by patients and their doctors.

For the physician, Boik delivers a better scientific understanding of the activities of natural compounds and the scientific basis for using them in applied cancer therapy. Physicians desperately need this information for two reasons. First, traditional Western medicine in the past has discounted the role of natural compounds in cancer therapy because the scientific approach was lacking. Second, the modern physician needs to serve patients who are sorting through more information than ever before. With this book, the value of using natural compounds in cancer therapy will gain new respect because it makes the scientific framework accessible to the physician for the first time.

For the researcher, this book organizes the details of the work done so far, which for the most part is at the level of in-vitro (test tube) and animal studies. But it also provides the big picture, indicating how the results of these studies can guide human investigations—the next logical and necessary step toward developing effective natural compounds for cancer treatment. It will help researchers set the direction for this undertaking.

Natural Compounds in Cancer Therapy fills the gap between patient expectations and the reality of scientific information available in the field. It is a bridge between the skepticism of physicians and the hope of patients. John Boik provides physicians, patients, and researchers with a map of where we are, where we need to go, and how we will get there.

I hope that one day we will not need to label medicine as alternative or traditional, complementary or integrative, Eastern or Western, but simply “Good Medicine.”

Good medicine will be defined as medicine that prevents illness, cures disease, avoids injury to the body, and brings comfort to the soul of the patient. We will help cancer patients by curing them sometimes, treating them meanwhile, comforting them ever, hoping with them always.

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