Book Review

by Kathleen Head, ND

Natural Compounds in Cancer Therapy

By John Boik, MAcOm

Oregon Medical Press

315 10th Ave. North, Princeton, MN 55371;
763-389-0768; sales@ompress.com
Soft cover; 521 pages; $32.00

Natural Compounds in Cancer Therapy outlines the mechanisms involved in cancer induction, growth, and metastasis in a very comprehensive but easily understood manner. The first section concentrates on the mechanisms involved in cancer at the cellular level, including abnormal signal transduction, faulty gene expression, and miscommunication with healthy cells. Mechanisms of cancer inhibition on a cellular level are also discussed, including apoptosis, halting cell proliferation, and improving cell differentiation. Finally, and most importantly, research on natural substances and how they interface with these mechanisms is covered.

The second section discusses cancer at the level of the organism – how large clusters of tumor cells interact with organs in the body. Boik outlines three main mechanisms: (1) angiogenesis, (2) invasion and metastasis, and (3) immune evasion. As in section one, nutrients and botanicals which can impact these mechanisms are discussed.

Section three encompasses two-thirds of the book and is organized in chapters according to the nutrient or botanical discussed, including chapters on selenium, vitamin C, omega-3 and -6 fatty acids, flavonoids, curcumin, fat soluble vitamins, and constituents common to many plants (e.g., triterpenoids, saponins, and sesquiterpenes). Each chapter summarizes the research – *in vitro*, animal, and clinical. Also included in section three is a chapter on natural compounds and their effects on chemotherapy and radiation – in many cases either potentiating the effects or decreasing the side effects of the conventional approach.

The book is illustrated with numerous figures and tables throughout and is extremely well-referenced. Several appendices offer further information of importance, including one on dose calculations with information on estimating clinical dosing based on *in vitro* data. For any practitioner treating oncology patients, this book will prove invaluable. It will also be of interest to cancer researchers, pharmacologists, and investigative patients.