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**ONCOLOGY
AS A CHALLENGE
FOR MODERN MEDICINE**

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Introduction

Cancerous diseases, usually called a “cancer,” are common despite the significant achievements of modern medicine whose continuous and dynamic development still has not allowed people to protect themselves against the disease.

On the basis of existing epidemiological data, it can be concluded that, in 2000, in Poland, a total of 120,000 people became ill with cancer, and almost 84 000 died of it. Currently, cancers are the second leading cause of death.

According to many authors, the incidence of certain cancers is connected with gender; women are more likely to have breast cancer, while men lung cancer. Regardless of the type of cancer diagnosed, it is necessary to take various preventive actions that will not only prevent the disease but will also be helpful in its early diagnosis, will increase the chances for cure and /or extend the 5-year survival period.

It should be noted that what is extremely important is the oncological awareness of each one of us, not only in terms of risk factors known as carcinogens, but also within the recommended screening which allows for early detection of cancer, because even conditions, such as, haemorrhoids, anal fissures, or ulcerative inflammatory bowel disease, if untreated, over time, may be subject to neoplastic transformation. Unfortunately, patients often seek medical attention in the last stage of the disease, and, in such situations, even modern medicine is powerless, and the patient becomes a hospice patient requiring multidisciplinary care of the entire treatment team.

Despite the unfavourable epidemiological data, the modern medicine gives hope to patients diagnosed with cancer. Among them we should mention the molecular methods of categorizing patients and targeted therapies which are being increasingly reported in the treatment of colorectal cancer. It also appears that a valuable method for the treatment of patients with breast cancer is hormone therapy in which classification of patients is based on the evaluation of the expression of estrogen and progesterone receptors in the tissue material. We are constantly looking for the factors responsible for the degree of malignancy. However, the above methods of diagnostics and treatment should still be improved and verified.

The monograph “Oncology as a challenge for modern medicine” has been divided into two chapters. The first chapter: “Prevention as an important element in oncology” focuses on the successive stages of prevention of colorectal cancer and diseases that may be subject to neoplastic transformation. The second chapter “Modern diagnostics and treatment in oncology” concerns new diagnostic methods of stomach cancer and colon cancer, holistic care of patients with breast cancer and neoadjuvant therapy and its effects in breast cancer.

Diana Piaszczyk

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