

FOREWORD

Compared to their cutaneous counterparts, noncutaneous melanomas are highly challenging from both diagnostic and therapeutic perspectives. Given that these tumors are often hidden and asymptomatic in their early stages, noncutaneous melanomas are often diagnosed late and portend poor prognoses. Noncutaneous melanomas also arise on sites with quite robust vascular and lymphatic networks, which combined with their distinct genetic and molecular signatures, make noncutaneous melanomas aggressive tumors that can metastasize early. Moreover, noncutaneous melanomas are relatively rare tumors, making large epidemiological studies and clinical trials difficult to perform. Finally, the majority of evidence guiding diagnosis and treatment focuses on ocular melanoma, which is the most common type of noncutaneous melanoma. In contrast, mucosal melanomas, particularly of the anus, rectum, and genitals, are quite rare and poorly studied.

This book, edited by Drs. Scott and Gerstenblith, integrates the expertise of a multidisciplinary group of clinicians and investigators to help shed light on recent advances in the understanding of noncutaneous melanomas. The authors skillfully present a comprehensive review of uveal melanoma, the most common type of ocular melanoma, as well as nasopharyngeal, genitourinary, and anorectal melanoma, and finally melanoma of unknown primary. This book will be highly valuable to clinicians caring for patients with noncutaneous melanoma who desire a review of the current literature regarding these entities. As the diagnostic and therapeutic approaches to these patients are continually evolving, it is imperative for clinicians to stay well versed on new advances gleaned from the primary literature. This book addresses each topic in sophisticated detail, and I hope that it will be used as a valuable resource for clinicians and investigators to assist in patient care and guide further research.

Jeremy S. Bordeaux, MD, MPH
Associate Professor of Dermatology
Director, Melanoma Program
Director, Dermatologic Surgery
University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center
Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio, USA
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