

Symptom Management in Advanced Cancer

Fourth edition

Robert Twycross DM Oxon, FRCP London

Emeritus Clinical Reader in Palliative Medicine,
Oxford University

Andrew Wilcock DM Nottm, FRCP London

Macmillan Clinical Reader in Palliative Medicine and Medical
Oncology, Nottingham University
Consultant Physician, Hayward House, Nottingham University
Hospitals NHS Trust, City Campus

Claire Stark Toller BM, BCh MA MRCP

Specialist Registrar in Palliative Medicine,
Oxford Postgraduate Deanery

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PREFACE

Symptom Management in Advanced Cancer is the companion volume to the *Palliative Care Formulary (PCF)*. More information about the drugs (or classes of drug) referred to in *Symptom Management in Advanced Cancer* can be found in the *Palliative Care Formulary, 3rd edition (PCF3)*, and on the website www.palliativedrugs.com.

Symptom Management in Advanced Cancer is written primarily for doctors, but will also be of value to nurses working with cancer patients, particularly in palliative care. It provides a framework of knowledge which will enable both doctors and nurses to develop a scientific and systematic approach to the management of symptoms in advanced cancer.

In palliative care, many drugs are used 'beyond the licence' or 'off label'. For example, few drugs are licensed (labelled) for use by continuous subcutaneous infusion (CSCI) but many are given this way. Because of the costs involved, it is unlikely that this situation will ever be rectified. Unlicensed use is not routinely indicated in *Symptom Management in Advanced Cancer*. However, details of licensed and unlicensed indications are given in *PCF3* (and the *Hospice and Palliative Care Formulary USA, 2nd edition*), and on www.palliativedrugs.com.

Physicians have a duty in common law to act with reasonable care and skill in a manner consistent with the practice of professional colleagues of similar standing. Thus, when prescribing outside the terms of a licence, doctors must be fully informed about the actions and uses of the drug and be assured of the quality of the particular product.

For this fourth edition of *Symptom Management in Advanced Cancer*, the authorship has been extended to ensure continuity for the future. All the chapters have been updated, and some extensively revised. Chapter 12, Emergencies, has been much expanded to encompass the list of emergencies in the UK Palliative Medicine Specialty Training Curriculum. Chapter 13, Last days, is entirely new. *Inter alia*, it discusses the implications for clinicians in England and Wales of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (and reflected in common law in Scotland and Northern Ireland), as well as consideration of other important end-of-life issues such as palliative sedation.

Scattered throughout the book is a series of Guidelines. These provide practitioner-friendly clinical advice, purposely restricted to 1–2 pages to facilitate their use in patient care. For the justification of the opinions expressed in the Guidelines, the reader should refer to the main text and to the articles referenced there.

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Robert Twycross
Andrew Wilcock
Claire Stark Toller
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