Preface

Poorly understood with regard to etiology, risk factors, and treatment, Merkel cell carcinoma is growing in incidence. Compared to other nonmelanoma skin cancers, Merkel cell is aggressive and frequently deadly. Yet the dissemination of information about this tumor remains inadequate even among specialists.

The purpose of this volume is to provide an accessible introduction to the clinical management of Merkel cell carcinoma for the interested specialist in dermatology, oncology, surgical oncology, plastic surgery, and allied disciplines. Practical elements of presentation and epidemiology are described, and the need for multimodal treatment is highlighted. Chapters on particular therapeutic approaches are written by experts in the relevant specialties. Treatment algorithms and case studies are provided to coalesce the large quantity of detailed information into a manageable, usable form. Finally, chapters on basic science and future research directions are included since ongoing investigations are crucial to battling this tumor.

Much remains to be done to better manage Merkel cell carcinoma. Here, we provide a starting point that cumulates the knowledge that we have, suggests guidance for treatment, and offers hope for the future.

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