Preface

Over the past 2 decades, spectacular advances have been made in understanding the molecular genetics of cancer. One of the major objectives of modern day cancer research is to identify genes that when mutated result in an increased susceptibility to the disease. This knowledge can be translated into clinical practice where screening for a predisposition becomes part of an at-risk patient’s surveillance and management strategy. An example where this has been successful is in the management of hereditary breast cancer.

Following the identification of the breast cancer susceptibility genes, BRCA1 and BRCA2, in the early 1990s, genetic screens that estimate a patient’s risk have now become available. While this success is now being extended to other cancer disorders, more genes need to be identified, characterized, and screens need to be developed. A book that brings together the most recent technological developments for identifying and screening cancer susceptibility genes is therefore very timely. The book is separated broadly into two parts. The first part, gene identification, informs scientists working at identifying novel cancer susceptibility genes, while the second part deals with mutation screening technologies that aid scientists and clinicians working to translate this knowledge into the clinic.

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