



# Interview with Dr. Robert S. Mannel, the co-editor of the *Clinical Gynecologic Oncology*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition

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## Editor's note

The *Clinical Gynecologic Oncology*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition released in 2017 is regarded as a must-have, readable and most comprehensive reference for diagnosis and treatment of gynecologic cancers. As far as we know, the 6<sup>th</sup> edition and 8<sup>th</sup> edition of this book have been translated into Chinese, which have aroused tremendous attention in the field of gynecologic oncology in China. To benefit the physicians and patients in China and to further the communication in the field, we launched a project to dig the stories and ideas behind the book, and to share the recognized leaders' stories and insights of the field.

During this project, we were honoured to conduct an interview with Dr. Robert S. Mannel, the Rainbolt Family Endowed Chair in Cancer and Professor of Gynecologic Oncology in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC), who shared his work as a director of the Stephenson Cancer Center (SCC), insights of clinical trials on gynecologic cancers in USA, stories of the book as the co-editor and advices to readers.

## Expert's introduction

Dr. Robert Mannel (*Figure 1*) is the Rainbolt Family Endowed Chair in Cancer and Professor of Gynecologic Oncology in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC). He joined the faculty in 1989 and has served as Section Chief for Gynecologic Oncology [1989–1997] and Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology [1997–2013]. Since 2006 he has served as director of the SCC, which achieved NCI designation under his leadership in 2018. As cancer center director, Dr. Mannel is responsible for working with the SCC senior leadership team, program leaders, shared resource directors and other SCC research and clinical



**Figure 1** Robert S. Mannel, MD.

stakeholders in the development, implementation and progress of strategic goals that advance the SCC's mission to reduce the burden of cancer in Oklahoma. Dr. Mannel also serves in the institutional role of associate vice provost for cancer programs on the OUHSC campus. Professionally, he is a national leader in the field of gynecologic oncology, having served on the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology—Gynecologic Oncology subspecialty board. His research interests focus mainly on clinical trials design and conduct. From 1990 to 2017 he served as principal investigator (PI) of the cancer center's NCI GOG/NRG institutional grant. Nationally, he served as chair of the GOG Ovarian Committee [2005–2010] and chair of the NRG/GOG Gynecologic Cancer Committee [2010–2017]. From 2014 to 2019 he served as corresponding PI for the SCC's NCI National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN) U10 Lead Academic Participating Site grant. In 2017, he was elected as a group chair for the NRG, the largest cooperative group research network for the NCTN. He has over 150 peer-reviewed publications in gynecologic

cancer and serves as editor of *Gynecologic Oncology*, a leading textbook in this field.

## Interview questions

### *About the journey of Clinical Gynecologic Oncology*

**GPM:** What were some of the critical moments that prompted you to pursue academic research of gynecologic malignancies?

**Dr. Mannel:** My passion for academic research of gynecologic malignancies has been fueled by my interaction with cancer patients throughout my career. In the United States, 1 out of 3 patients with a new cancer diagnosis will succumb to their disease if we practice the highest level of care that we currently can provide. I have always found that statistic to be very sobering and a call to action to change our current understanding of cancer through research.

**GPM:** You are the director of the SCC since 2007, what is the aim of the center and what does your role entail?

**Dr. Mannel:** As cancer center director, I am responsible for working with the SCC's senior leadership team, program leaders, shared resource directors and other research and clinical stakeholders in the development, implementation and progress of strategic goals that advance the mission to reduce the burden of cancer in Oklahoma and worldwide.

**GPM:** What is your management philosophy or principle as the director of the SCC?

**Dr. Mannel:** As director of the SCC I rely on a senior administrative team of associate directors to develop impactful programs ranging from research, clinical care, education to community outreach and faculty development. The focus of our senior leadership team is to provide patient centered, disease based, multidisciplinary care for our cancer patients in an environment of education and research and to be a national leader in the conduct of oncology research.

**GPM:** Your research interests focus mainly on clinical trials design and conduct. What do you regard as the most interesting aspects of clinical trials design and conduct? What have been driving you to move forward to achieve your goal?

**Dr. Mannel:** Participating in clinical trials is a tangible

way to offer our patients access to the newest and most promising therapies. I feel strongly that, if we do not learn something from each of our patients how to fight cancer better, we have let not only ourselves but our patients down.

**GPM:** What would you comment on the current statuses and development in the clinical trials on gynecologic cancers in USA?

**Dr. Mannel:** The advent of precision medicine based on genomic, proteomic and tumor micro-environment information is revolutionizing the way we are conducting clinical trials. This is truly a golden era for gynecologic oncology research which is transforming the way we take care of patients and the hope we can offer them. Our biggest challenge remains that we have too many outstanding ideas and proposals for the resources at hand.

### *About the book Clinical Gynecologic Oncology*

**GPM:** When was your first time to know the book *Clinical Gynecologic Oncology*?

**Dr. Mannel:** As an obstetrics and gynecology resident training in the early 1980's, I was told that *Clinical Gynecologic Oncology* was the absolute source for knowledge and is what I should study. It was a great recommendation and formed the foundation of my learning in gynecologic cancers.

**GPM:** Could you introduce us to your role as the co-editor in *Clinical Gynecologic Oncology*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition? Could you share with us the most impressive event during the preparation?

**Dr. Mannel:** The book has a great editorial team that is committed to the highest quality product. It all starts with recruiting recognized leaders in the various areas of gynecologic oncology and drawing on their expertise. As editors, we take pride in assembling the most knowledgeable team of authors and helping to organize their thoughts in a very learner friendly format.

**GPM:** Are there some subjects that you would have liked to include in the book but did not eventually?

**Dr. Mannel:** We tried to balance being all inclusive with readability. We made some tough editorial decisions to keep the content compact and up to date as possible. We also wanted this text to remain very understandable by learners at all levels of training. In so doing we limited some of the older data and focused on the most recent standard of

care and emerging research.

**GPM: Comparing the old editions, what are the features of the 9<sup>th</sup> edition in your opinion?**

**Dr. Mannel:** We have focused efforts to open the book to emerging areas of interest such as precision medicine, advanced minimally invasive techniques and areas of research focus that are likely to change standard of care.

**GPM: Any advice that you would like to give to the readers of the book?**

**Dr. Mannel:** The book is meant to be read in its entirety by chapter. If you want to learn about a topic, read the whole chapter as it is organized in a fashion to build knowledge about a subject, rather than just answer a specific question.

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That should be the goal of any excellent text book.

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### **Footnote**

*Conflicts of Interest:* The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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