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Seminars Article

# Seminars Issue – COVID-19 and its impact on urologic oncology - Introduction to the first issue in a two-part series

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The past year presented us with many unprecedented personal, professional and at times ethical challenges. The near complete national shut-down during the initial surge of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 forced many of us to prioritize patients for immediate treatment or deferral in the wake of extremely limited operating room capacity, as ventilators and hospital beds were either being used or reserved for COVID-19 patients.

Managing the urologic oncology patient required a new level of care, compassion and responsibility as we triaged those with the highest risk disease, while consoling the anxieties of those with lower risk malignancies whose treatment we thought could be more safely delayed. At the start of the shut-down, a network of members of the Society of Urologic Oncology from various academic centers across North America even held running virtual email conversations, resulting in the rapid development of case priority listings, creating an informal national consensus on which oncology surgical cases could be safely deferred and which should proceed more urgently.

In addition, as our patients were faced with similar decisions, such as the treatment of their urologic cancers or face the risks of potential COVID-19 infection, anxiety levels rose and in turn, many of us spent hours discussing the

balancing of these risks. Similar to surgical case management, managing patients on systemic therapy raised a new level of potential danger and fears from iatrogenic immunosuppression and risk of infection with this lethal new infectious disease.

The current Seminars issue of Urologic Oncology: Seminars and Original Investigations is the first in a two-part series addressing the experience and impact of COVID-19 on Urologic Oncology. This first issue addresses the particular management issues ranging from patient referral challenges to surgical case triaging and the impact of delays of surgery, and the management of systemic therapy in the COVID-19 era. The forthcoming second issue will continue to cover patient care, but also focus on some of the difficulties in addressing the needs of Urology and Urologic Oncology trainees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We know that these contributions will not only provide perspective on what we have all been experiencing over the past year, but also help provide insight and roadmaps for the future, if and when needed.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest for this article.

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