PREFACE

The role of hormones and growth factors in the pathogenesis and therapy of colon/rectal cancer is biologically intricate and medically important. More detailed information in this area will pave the way for the rational use of more potent and specific agents for accurate discrimination between sensitive and insensitive tumors, and the identification of biochemical markers of poor prognosis.

Dukes B disease is considered as early colon/rectal cancer, one-third of them will have occult metastases at the time of diagnosis. Although by multiple radiologic investigations and aspiration biopsies, tumor cells can be detected in 20-25% of cases, it remains difficult to detect the patients with occult metastases and to predict prognosis. Identification of high-risk and low-risk patients is, therefore, a major issue. The prognostic factors especially concern a series of new biological parameters, which can be used not only for estimation of patients' prognosis and for selection of high-risk and low-risk patients, but also, some of them, for prediction of response to treatment.
Hence, in this multifaceted study, it was our endeavour to investigate in detail the involvement of tumor markers, hormones, growth factors and their receptors in patients with Dukes B or C colon/rectal carcinoma. This has emerged into first systematic presentation of a thesis.

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NANDITA GHOSH