

FIGURE 9

## The Pillars of Cancer Care

Physicians often refer to the “pillars” of cancer treatment. For many years, there was one treatment pillar: surgery. In 1896, a second pillar, radiotherapy, was added. The foundations for the third treatment pillar, cytotoxic chemotherapy, were laid in the early 1940s when a derivative of nitrogen mustard was explored as a treatment for lymphoma. These three pillars—surgery, radiation, and cytotoxic chemotherapy—continue to

form the foundation of treatment for most patients with cancer. The first molecularly targeted therapeutics were introduced in the late 1990s, leading to the fourth pillar, molecularly targeted therapy, which continues to grow. Likewise, the late 1990s laid the groundwork for the fifth treatment pillar, immunotherapy. The number of anticancer therapeutics that form the most recent two pillars of cancer care continues to increase every year.

