Every year around 10 million people are diagnosed with cancer, around 80% of whom are destined to die from the disease, accounting for 1 in 6 of all deaths worldwide. And while research into cancer is bringing huge improvements in the range of options available to cancer patients, these new therapies bring with them massive challenges for healthcare systems struggling to find the huge sums of money for the large numbers of patients involved. This Very Short Introduction explores the facts underlying these figures, starting with the basic facts about the disease before moving on to the bigger picture of the economics and politics of cancer care. Nick James, founder of the CancerHelp UK website, examines the trends in diagnosis of the disease and the constant improvements in treatment techniques that result in better cure rates and increased quality and quantity of life for cancer patients. The book also considers issues surrounding expensive drug development, highlights what can be done to reduce the risk of developing cancer, and discusses the use of complementary and alternative therapies.