The fourth edition of this, the first textbook of palliative care, continues to provide a concise, but authoritative, guide to the provision of palliative care. The text has been thoroughly revised and reorganized throughout to reflect the recent pace of change in this rapidly moving field.

Coverage is comprehensive, ranging from symptom control through to legal and ethical issues, with emphasis throughout on practical guidelines and advice. The introduction of mini-contents lists and key points, and increased use of tables and explanatory line figures, has improved the user friendly quality of the text, and the reader will be able to dip in the book whenever it is needed and access information quickly.

Palliative care has now become firmly established beyond malignant conditions, and this is reflected fully in this new edition which includes issues specific to AIDS, neurodegenerative disorders, progressive lung conditions, end-stage renal disease and cardiac failure. Other improvements include alphabetical re-organization of the symptom control section, increased coverage of communication and psychosocial issues and spiritual care, and a widened discussion of ethical concerns.

Retaining its St Christopher’s roots through the experienced editorial team, the multiprofessional nature of palliative care is reflected in the choice of contributors from a wide range of disciplines.

Palliative physicians, oncologists, general practitioners, nurses and other health professionals caring for patients with advanced, progressive diseases will continue to find this an invaluable handbook to be referred to often in the clinical setting.