Breast diseases, both benign and malignant, comprise a significant problem in recent times. Benign entities in the breast may pose as a harbinger for future malignancies or just a daunting immediate dilemma. Invasive breast carcinoma remains the second leading cause of cancer-related mortality in the Western world today. In the year 2000, the average lifetime risk has risen to be one in eight women with an estimated 183,000 new cases being diagnosed in American women.

To address this continued medical issue, this medical textbook in its second edition was compiled by four editors who represent four different fields of medicine: a radiation oncologist, a professor of pharmacology and medicine, a surgeon, and a professor of medicine. These diverse backgrounds serve to produce a rich and multi-faceted text that explores every aspect of diseases that affect the breast. This text also contains an impressive list of contributing authors from all over the world, representing numerous professions ranging from physical therapists to medical doctors to registered nurses. Their combined efforts produce this comprehensive and informative text that would be of great value to any medical professional or student interested in learning about diseases of the breast.

The text is divided into 18 sections, which are further subdivided into 76 chapters. Each of the chapters ends with a conclusion and references, facilitating further research if the reader so chooses. The innumerable figures in the text consist of very well labeled and informative pictures, diagrams and tables, which greatly aid in understanding the text.

The content of the text is impressively comprehensive. The first section begins by covering the anatomy and development of the breast. It is a short section that provides a concise, helpful introduction to the text. The second section addresses the diagnosis and treatment of benign breast diseases, beginning with a short chapter on how to perform a breast exam. The next section discusses imaging and biopsy techniques; it describes the techniques and their efficacy.

The next 15 sections are dedicated to exploring the many aspects of breast cancer. The first in this series discusses the epidemiology of breast cancer, including non-genetic and genetic factors. This section also contains information on family history of breast cancer, including a chapter on prophylactic mastectomy and a chapter on chemoprevention.
Another section addresses the pathogenesis of breast cancer, providing chapters on oncogenes and suppressor genes, animal models, in vitro models, and control of invasion and metastasis. Further sections discuss in situ carcinoma, staging, and pathology of invasive breast cancer.

An important section follows this on primary treatment of invasive breast cancer. It contains chapters on surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy. This treatment section is followed by sections on therapeutic problems, managing recurrent breast cancer, new therapies, and a lengthy section explaining numerous site-specific therapies of metastatic breast cancer.

The last four sections discuss varied and interesting topics. For instance, there is a section devoted to breast cancer found in special populations, such as older women and minority women. There is a section on issues in survivorship: nursing care, rehabilitation, reproductive issues, and more. One section covers medicolegal aspects of breast cancer and its treatments, and the final section concludes this text by advising the reader as to what techniques are helpful in advancing their knowledge of breast cancer (e.g. molecular biology techniques, clinical trial techniques, etc.).

This text is excellent and detailed reference. It is informative, comprehensive, and should be highly recommended to any medical personnel interested in diseases of the breast. The editors state: "We hope that the second edition of Diseases of the Breast becomes a useful resource for clinicians and scientists and fosters the understanding and communication necessary to provide optimal patient care and to achieve rapid advances in managing diseases of the breast, especially breast cancer."