

Lesson 11

M Category

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AJCC
American Joint Committee on Cancer

Validating science. Improving patient care.

M Assessment

- Different rules for M category
 - Defined by method of assessment
 - Not by time frame (diagnostic vs. surgery) like T and N
- Rationale
 - Critical to know assessment to analyze outcomes
 - Clinical judgment vs. proven microscopically
- Clinical Classification – valid M categories
 - cT; cN; cM0, cM1, pM1
- Pathologic Classification – valid M categories
 - pT; pN; cM0, cM1, pM1



cM Requirements

- cM0 only requires history and physical exam (H&P)
 - Does not mean registrar has to find H&P report in med record
 - Means physician performed physical exam on patient
- No symptoms or signs of metastasis is cM0
- Imaging is not necessary to assign cM0
- Infer status as cM0 unless known clinical M1 (cM1)
- Optimal extent of testing (although none is required)
 - Understand workup ordered based on T, N, and other results
 - NCCN Guidelines
 - American College of Radiology Appropriateness Criteria
- cM1
 - Clinical evidence of metastasis by physical exam
 - Imaging showing evidence of metastasis
 - Invasive procedures including exploratory surgery, **without** bx



pM Requirements

- pM1 requires positive biopsy of metastatic site
 - Biopsy shows presence of cancer in metastatic site
- Negative biopsy of suspected metastatic site is cM0
 - Biopsy shows absence of cancer in metastatic site
 - Assign cM0
 - Do NOT assign pM0
- pM0
 - NOT a valid category
 - May NOT be assigned
 - Undefined concept
 - Would require microscopic exam of **all** tissues in the body
 - Even autopsy does not sample every single piece of tissue



Uncertain Information

- Define uncertain information
 - Ambiguity about involvement
 - Details to meet staging criteria are unclear
 - Choosing between two categories
- Correct M category for uncertain information
 - Lower or less advanced category used
- Define unknown information
 - Physician must know M status
 - Not used to describe situation where registrar does not have access to the information
- No M category for unknown information
 - Unknown is **NOT** valid for M
 - Never assign lowest category for unknown



MX Not Valid

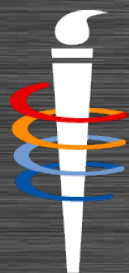
- MX
 - NOT a valid category
 - May NOT be assigned
 - Pathologist may NOT use MX
 - Leaves M blank if no metastatic tissue examined (not applicable)
 - Leaves M blank if metastatic tissue examined does not show cancer
 - Pathologist can only assign pM1 - tissue examined showed cancer
 - New to 7th edition

- M status critical
 - M status changes stage group
 - M status drastically changes patient care and treatment plan



Thank you

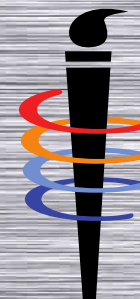
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