

Lesson 17

N Category

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Minimum Number - Sufficient Sampling

- Minimum number
 - Sufficient sampling to identify positive nodes
 - Eliminate false negatives
- Minimum to be examined can apply to
 - Number and
 - Location of nodes
- Requirements
 - Described in site chapters as appropriate
 - Detail common medical practice
- Sentinel nodes
 - If accepted as accurate for defining involvement, and
 - Sentinel node procedure performed
 - Minimum does **NOT** apply



pN when Minimum Not Met

- Lymph node surgery performed
 - Fewer than ideal minimum number examined
 - N category still generally classified as pN
- pN category assignment
 - Based on information available
 - Number of positive nodes and/or
 - Location of most advanced pathologic node resected
 - Assigned even if minimum number or location criteria not met
- Impact of using pN in this situation
 - Importance of outcomes data analysis
 - Determine accuracy of nodal staging with less than minimum



Sentinel Node

- Sentinel node designation (sn)
 - Example: pN0(sn), pN1(sn)
 - Used when **only** a sentinel node biopsy is performed
 - **Not** used if further dissection of nodes is performed
- Breast chapter instructions for (sn)
 - Indicates nodal status based on less than axillary dissection
 - Used for sentinel node procedure
 - Used where sentinel & non-sentinel nodes are <6 nodes (less than standard low axillary dissection)
 - Do **NOT** use (sn) when ≥ 6 sentinel nodes removed
- Does **not** apply to registry coding of procedure
 - Instructions only apply to assigning stage



Pathologic Node Assessment

- Assigning pN
 - Pathologic primary tumor assessment (pT) is
 - Generally necessary to assign pathologic nodal assessment (pN)
- N categories
 - In conjunction with pT
 - Do **NOT** need pathologic exam of **highest** N category to assign pN
 - Example:
 - Resection/path exam of N1 nodes only
 - No resection/path exam of N2 and N3 nodes
 - Assign pN1
 - Physician determines appropriate nodal resection for patient
 - N category criteria does not dictate nodal exam



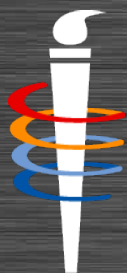
Isolated Tumor Cells

- ITC
 - Single tumor cells or small clusters of cells
 - Clusters of cells $\leq 0.2\text{mm}$ in greatest dimension
 - Identified by
 - Routine histology or immunohistochemistry (IHC)
 - Nonmorphologic techniques such as flow cytometry or DNA analysis
 - Designated as pN0 (i+)
 - Defined in chapters where this commonly occurs
- Nodes with **only** ITC are assigned pN0
- **Exception:** nodes with **only** ITC are assigned pN1 for
 - Melanoma
 - Merkel Cell



Thank you

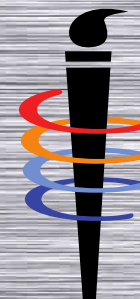
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