

Lesson 3

T, N, M Categories Used to Describe the Cancer Involvement

Donna M. Gress, RHIT, CTR



AJCC

American Joint Committee on Cancer

Validating science. Improving patient care.

Categories

- Categories are used to describe the cancer
- Anatomic extent or involvement by cancer is the foundation
- Additional non-anatomic factors as proven necessary
- Defined and modified based on
 - Clinical data
 - Biological properties
 - Anatomic site, tissue structure
 - Histologic type
 - Prognostic information for outcomes and survival



Categories

- Category
 - Refers to tumor, nodes, and metastasis
 - Also refers to each of the T's, N's and M's

- For example, T2 is a category
 - Includes multiple criteria such as size and extent
 - T2 is not considered a value
 - Value would be the size, extension, etc, that makes up the criteria
 - AJCC does not use the word “value”



T Category

- **T**umor – primary tumor
- Criteria for the category include
 - Size of the cancer
 - Contiguous spread or extension
- Varies by anatomic site
- Important to understand anatomy
 - Different tissue layers of the site
 - Landmarks and named parts of the site
 - Relationship to neighboring organs and structures



N Category

- **N**ode – regional draining lymph nodes
- Criteria for the category include
 - Presence or absence of cancer
 - Extent of cancer
 - Number of nodes involved
 - Location of nodes involved
- Varies by anatomic site
- Important to understand anatomy
 - Location of lymph nodes including ipsilateral & bilateral
 - Structure of nodes
 - Terminology: extracapsular, matted, totally replaced nodes where the nodal architecture is no longer evident



M Category

- **M**etastasis – distant metastasis
- Criteria for the category include
 - Presence or absence of cancer
 - Involvement of
 - Specific structures
 - Number of structures
- Varies by anatomic site
- Important to understand anatomy
 - How cancer spreads by
 - Vascular channels
 - Lymphatics beyond the defined regional nodes
 - Different risk based on
 - Organs involved
 - Organ structure involved – capsule vs. parenchyma



Additional Categories

- Other categories are required for some sites
 - Used with T, N, and M
 - Level of importance equal to those categories
- Categories include
 - Histology
 - Age
 - Location
 - Grade
 - Mitotic rate/count
 - Prognostic scoring index for risk factors
 - PSA
 - Gleason
 - Serum tumor markers (AFP, hCG, LDH)
 - Peripheral blood involvement



Additional Categories

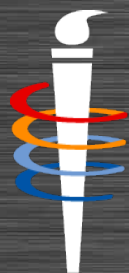
Chapters utilizing additional categories

- 8. Thyroid
 - Histology, age
- 10. Esophagus & Esophagogastric Junction
 - Histology, location, grade
- 13. Appendix
 - Histology, grade
- 16. GIST
 - Mitotic rate
- 27. Bone
 - Grade
- 28. Soft Tissue Sarcoma
 - Grade
- 36. Corpus Uteri
 - Histology
- 39. Gestational Trophoblastic Tumors
 - Prognostic scoring index
- 41. Prostate
 - PSA, Gleason
- 42. Testis
 - Serum Tumor Markers (AFP, hCG, LDH)
- 57. Primary Cutaneous Lymphomas
 - Peripheral blood involvement



Thank you

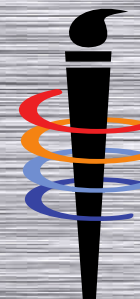
Donna M. Gress, RHIT, CTR
AJCC Technical Specialist



AJCC

American Joint Committee on Cancer

Validating science. Improving patient care.



633 N. Saint Clair, Chicago, IL 6011-3211

cancerstaging.org