

# Lesson 4

## Stage Groups Put Together Cases With Similar Prognosis

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# AJCC

**American Joint Committee on Cancer**

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# Purpose of Stage Groups

- Reproducible and easily communicated summary of staging information
- Patient care
  - Helps patients understand the extent of their disease
  - Communicate treatment and prognosis with patients
  - Ease of communication between physicians
- Data analysis
  - Larger numbers of similar patients
  - Statistically significant



# Creation of Stage Groups

- Basic premise – patients with similar prognosis
- Stage group made up of these categories
  - T
  - N
  - M
  - Can include other additional categories
- Group patients with similar prognosis
  - Creates groups with specific category criteria
  - Consolidates many combinations into a few groups
- Groups may contain
  - Variance within categories, T1 N0 M0 and T2 N0 M0
  - Variance between categories, T1 N1 M0 and T2 N0 M0
  - As long as their outcomes are similar



# Designation of Stage Groups

- Roman numerals I through IV
  - Higher numbers indicate increasing severity
  - 0 (zero) also used
- General meaning of stage groups, exceptions allowed
  - 0 – in situ
  - I – small tumors, less deeply invasive, negative nodes
  - II – increasing tumor and nodal extent
  - III – increasing tumor and nodal extent
  - IV – distant metastasis
- Subsets
  - Expand groupings using A, B, C
  - More refined prognostic information



# Meaning of Stage Groups

- Stage groups have prognostic meaning
  - Must have statistically significant separation between stages
  - Higher number stages must have worse prognosis than lower numbers
  - Not just split of cases between numbers I through IV
  - Not just a range of better to worse and patients fit on that continuum
- All cases within group have same outcome
  - Even though their burden of disease may vary



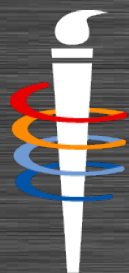
# Changes in Stage Groups

- Category combinations moved when outcomes change
- Must maintain separation between stages for outcomes analysis
- Changes may be due to
  - Improved clinical staging techniques better define the disease
  - Improvements in treatment change prognosis in certain types of involvement, for example
    - New surgical techniques for local extent
    - New systemic drugs for nodal involvement



# Thank you

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