Lesson 18
M Category

Donna M. Gress, RHIT, CTR

American Joint Committee on Cancer
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Isolated Tumor Cells in Metastatic Sites

• Isolated tumor cells in metastatic sites
  – Circulating cells in the blood
  – Micrometastasis (≤ 0.2mm) in bone marrow or nonregional tissue
  – Histologically visible micrometasis

  – Identified by
    • IHC
    • Molecular techniques

  – Designated as cM0(i+)
    • Note this is clinical M0 since pM0 does not exist

  – Defined in chapters where this commonly occurs

  – May be prognostic for recurrence or survival
CTC and DTC

- Circulating tumor cells – CTC

- CTC are identified in
  - Blood

- Disseminated tumor cells – DTC

- DTC are identified in
  - Distant organs or nonregional tissue
  - Bone Marrow
M Category for Classification

• Assign appropriate M category for clinical classification

• Clinical stage M category based on assessment method

• Example for colon cancer diagnostic workup
  – CT guided liver biopsy positive for mets
  – CT chest shows lung mets
  – Assign pM1 for clinical stage

  – Do NOT record cM1 and pM1 in registry data fields
  – Stage is NOT to document all findings
  – Only one M category for each stage
  – AJCC does not have rules to assign cT cN cM pM clinical stage
M Category for Classification

• Assign appropriate M category for pathologic classification

• Pathologic stage M category based on assessment method

• Example for breast cancer mastectomy
  – CT chest shows lung mets
  – Bone biopsy positive for mets
  – Assign pM1 for pathologic stage

  – Do NOT record cM1 and pM1 in registry data fields
  – Stage is NOT to document all findings
  – Only one M category for each stage
  – AJCC does not have rules to assign pT pN cM pM pathologic stage
M Category for Classification

• Do NOT use registry M data fields to document test results
  – Difference between coding systems and assigning AJCC stage

• Coding systems
  – All data fields are utilized to document all available information
  – Code every field, none are left blank

• Assigning AJCC stage
  – Only one M category assigned for each stage
  – M category assigned independently for each classification
    • Not based on M category used in other classifications
  – Assign M category based on
    • Assessment method
    • For classification time frame
Thank you

Donna M. Gress, RHIT, CTR
AJCC Technical Specialist

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633 N. Saint Clair, Chicago, IL 60611-3211

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