

BEST PRACTICE

Clinical Staging

Standard 4.3: The cancer committee develops a process to monitor physician use of the AJCC or other appropriate staging, site specific prognostic indicators, and evidence based national treatment guidelines in the treatment planning for cancer patients. The results of this monitoring are reported to the cancer committee annually.

Purpose: To promote accurate and timely staging as an important element in treatment planning, monitoring treatment patterns and evaluating outcomes.

Policy: Clinical staging is required for all analytic cases. It should be used by the initial treating physician at a time and recorded in a manner that would document and promote its role in the treatment planning process

Procedure:

1. The initial treating physician must document consideration of the clinical stage in the treatment planning process:

This responsibility may be fulfilled by one of the following processes.

- a. Making a notation of the clinical stage in an acceptable document that would indicate clinical staging was considered prior to the initiation of treatment. These documents would include:
 1. Pre-treatment consultation
 2. Surgical site procedure verification record
 3. Operative note
 4. History and physical
- a. Participating in a prospective case presentation at the weekly cancer conference.
 1. When abstracting a case, the tumor registrar reviews each of these document types for notation of the clinical stage.
 2. A dialog box is created in each abstract that lists the clinical stage, the date of the document, the first course of treatment, its date and the name of the treating physician. To assure compliance with Standard 4.3, this information is reviewed by the tumor registry data coordinator during an annual 10% random review of tumor registry abstracts according to provisions in standard 2.10
 3. The initial treating physicians are expected to demonstrate use of the clinical stage when planning the treatment process for at least 90% of the annual case load.
 4. The initial treating physician is defined as the individual providing the first definitive course of treatment for the disease process.
 5. The accuracy rate for the clinical staging is to be at least 90%.

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