



Lesson 6

Additional Material: What is Cancer Staging



- Why it is needed
- How is a cancer's stage determined
- What does it mean
- How is it used

Why Stage is Needed

- Cancer usually needs a team of physicians to provide care
 - Primary care physician (family physician)
 - Radiologist (reports on imaging)
 - Pathologist (reports on tissue removed from your body)
 - Surgeon (removes the cancer through surgery)
 - Medical Oncologist (treats with cancer drugs)
 - Radiation Oncologist (treats with radiation)
- Common language for accurate physician communication

- Cancer staging
 - Describes amount of cancer in patient's body
 - Describes where the cancer has spread to within the body
 - Can include other information about the cancer

- Stage is based on where in the body the cancer started – not where it spread to
 - Example: breast, colon, lung
- AJCC Cancer Staging Manual 8th edition
 - Presents rules for staging
 - Individual chapters by parts of the body (disease sites)
 - Written by leading experts and used worldwide
 - Based on national cancer data that is continually collected from hospitals and analyzed
- AJCC Cancer Staging Version 9
 - Presents rules for staging
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AJCC stage includes:

- T – main tumor in the body, where it started
- N – spread of cancer to lymph nodes, metastasis to lymph nodes
- M – distant metastasis, or the spread of cancer to other parts of the body, either through the lymph nodes or through the blood

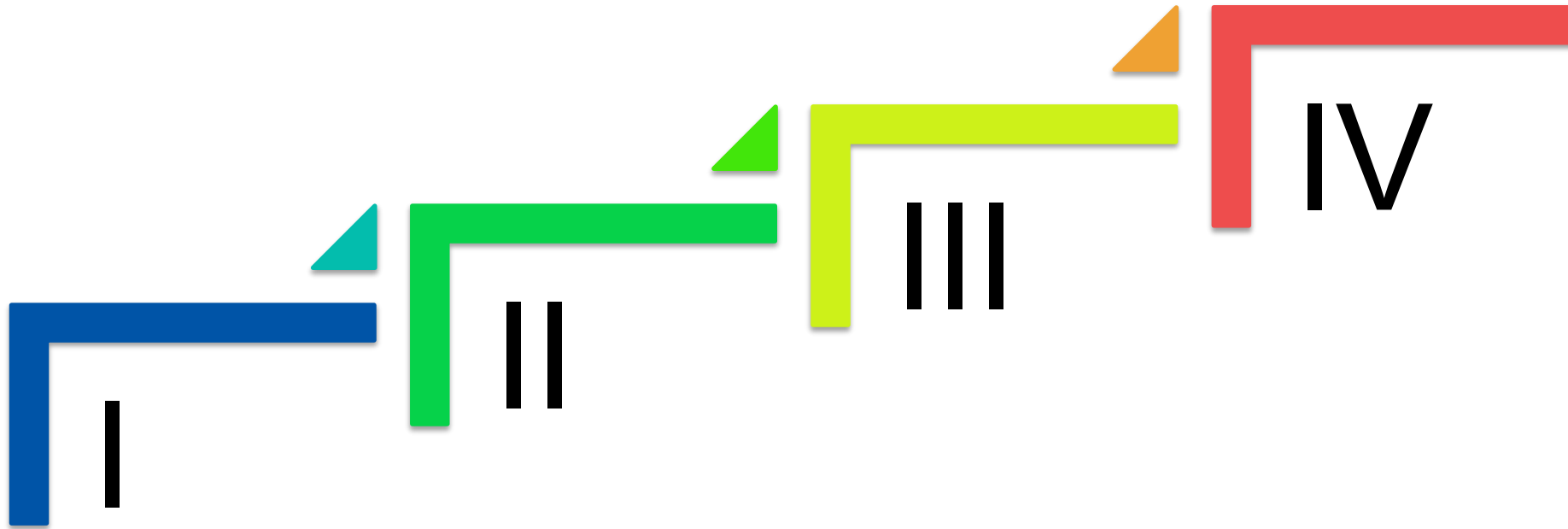
- Each T, N, and M categories are assigned numbers
- Higher numbers mean more cancer involvement than the lower numbers
- T – category is numbered 0 through 4
- N – category is numbered 0 through 3
- M – category is numbered 0 through 1

Calculation of T, N, M

- The physician chooses the T, N, and M that best describes the patient's cancer
- These are written together to describe the patient's cancer
- There are many possible calculations of T, N, M
 - For example:
 - T1 N0 M0
 - T2 N1 M0
 - T4 N2 M1

- The calculations of T, N, and M are put into a stage group, simply called stage
- Four main stage groups
 - I, II, III, IV
 - May be broken down further: IA, IB
- Stage
 - There are many possible calculations of the numbered categories for T, N, and M
 - Organizes calculations into four stage groups

Stage



Different criteria for each stage, and also different by part of the body where the cancer started

- Why classify TNM into a stage
 - Gather together patients that will have the same type of treatment
 - Gather together patients that will have the same outcome or chance of survival

- What does the stage number mean
 - Higher numbers mean it has spread in the body
 - Higher numbers mean it is more aggressive

How Staging is Used

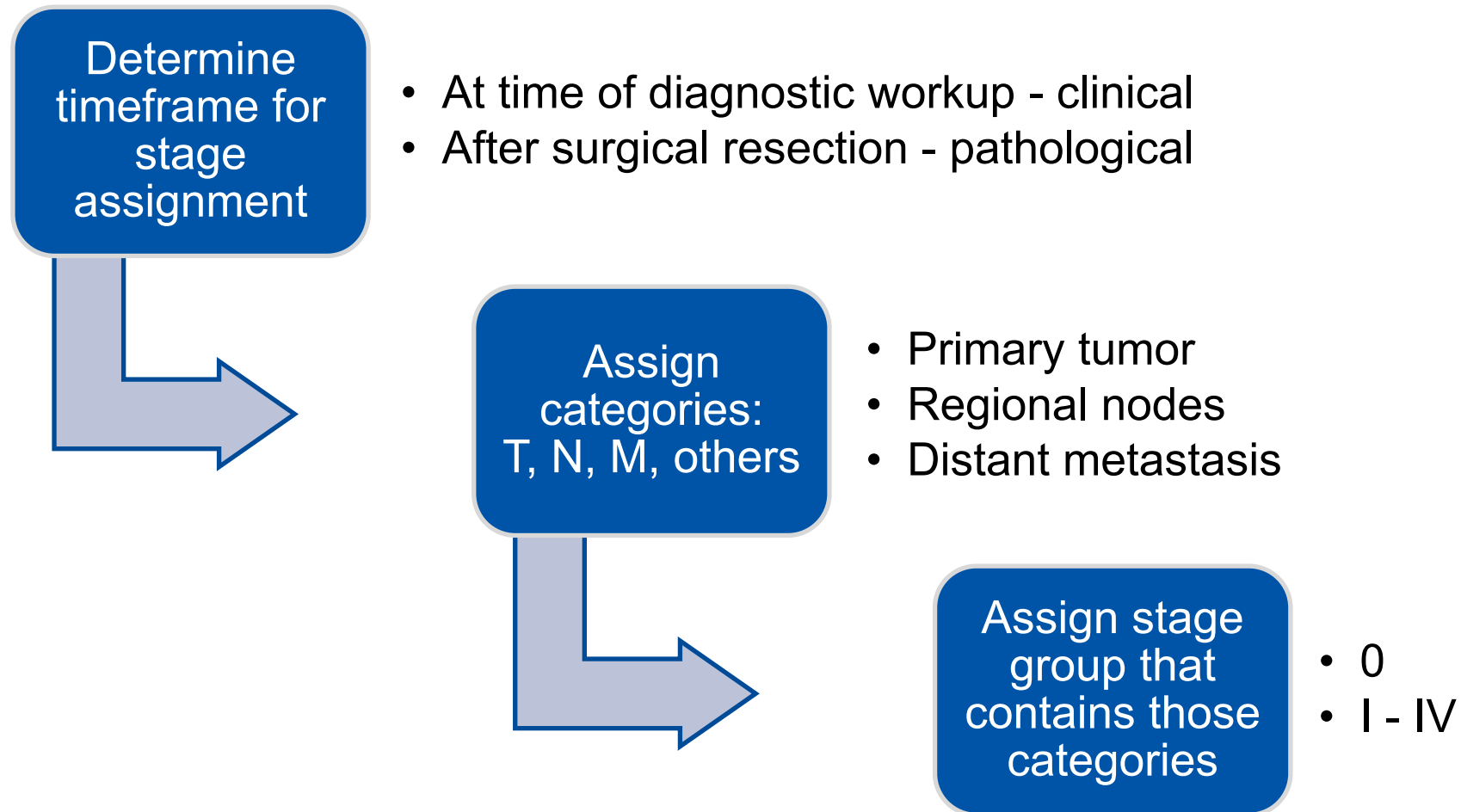
- Used to select treatment
 - Guidelines are available to help physicians choose the best treatments based on the stage

- Used to predict outcome
 - Information is gathered on many patients based on stage
 - Chance of recurrence of cancer
 - Patient's probability of surviving over a number of years (1, 5, 10 years)

Staging Summary

- A language for physicians
- Provides information to the patient

TNM Stage Process





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Thank You