



The Royal College of Pathologists
Pathology: the science behind the cure

Datasets, TNM and dysplasia: news and views from the Working Group on Cancer Services

This document was first published in the RCPATH Bulletin 2006;133:52 (January 2006).
It supersedes the *Statement from the College's Working Group on Cancer Services on the 6th edition of 'TNM Classification of Malignant Tumours'*, published online in May 2004 and withdrawn in June 2006.

The primary purpose of this Working Group is to commission and oversee the production and revision of the College's datasets for the histopathology reporting of cancer, although it has a wider role in advising on issues relating to cancer pathology services and has recently opened discussions with the Cancer Action Team on the Cancer Peer Review Standards.

The Working Group works within the Professional Standards Unit and reports through the Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC) on Histopathology.

The Group wishes to bring the following points to the notice of College members.

CONSULTATION ON NEW DATASETS

Several new and revised datasets are in the final stages of writing and will be placed on the College website for wider consultation as soon as possible.

Following the consultation in spring 2005, it has been decided to omit the word 'minimum' from the titles of the datasets. The authors of datasets will be encouraged to define core data items that should be part of the National Cancer dataset. Non-core data includes items required for a complete report, to address local requirements or for clinical trials and research.

SOFTWARE LICENSING

Members of the College will be aware that the College is able to licence the intellectual property contained in the datasets to suppliers of laboratory computer systems and software companies. At the time of writing (October 2005), three companies have been granted a licence to use the dataset information in their products (Clinisys, AES and mTuitive). The Professional Standards Unit would welcome feedback from members on the utility of these products.

TNM STAGING

The Working Group is aware that there is variation in the use of the fifth and sixth editions of the TNM staging system between pathologists and pathological specialty groups. In the interests of international conformity, the Group has decided to recommend that the default position should be to use the sixth edition TNM.

As some specialty groups feel strongly that this edition introduced inappropriate changes in some areas, the Group will consider representations from specialty groups (not individual pathologists) to continue using fifth edition TNM for specific tumour sites; any recommendations will be taken to the SAC on Histopathology for ratification. The case for using the fifth edition TNM for colorectal carcinomas has already been accepted.

RECORDING DYSPLASIA

Finally, Cancer Registries are concerned about the under-reporting of pre-malignant diseases, as clinical coding teams only forward to Registries cases where the term '*in situ* carcinoma' or 'CIN3' is specified. Cases of severe dysplasia are not currently recorded. The Group does not want to open the debate over whether severe dysplasia is the same as *in situ* carcinoma at all sites. Therefore, for coding purposes only, it was decided to recommend that all cases of severe dysplasia and *in situ* carcinoma should be recorded at Cancer Registries. This change is likely to be dealt with clinical coding teams in most Trusts, but may impact on the reporting systems to Cancer Registries in some laboratories.

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CHAIR OF CANCER SERVICES WORKING GROUP

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