

2018 Grade Rules and TNM Stage Group Assignment

There is a bit of confusion regarding the relationship between the new 2018 grade rules and TNM staging for sites that utilize grade as a “prognostic factor” in assigning the correct TNM stage group.

According to Grade Pathological Note 3 (as found in the 2018 Grade Coding Instructions Manual), registrars are to assign the **highest grade** from the primary tumor. ***If the clinical grade is the highest grade identified, use the grade that was identified during the clinical time frame for both the clinical grade and the pathological grade.***

For sites utilizing grade as a prognostic factor in determining the correct TNM stage group, Grade Pathological Note 3 (with regards to a higher *clinical* grade) makes the correct pathological TNM stage group assignment a bit confusing.

According to Donna Gress of the AJCC, “the rules for AJCC pathological staging include ALL of the information from clinical staging + operative findings + resected specimen path reports. So if you have a G3 clinically and a G2 on the path specimen, the correct grade to use as the prognostic factor in assigning the correct pathological stage group would be G3.”

Assignment of both grade fields and pathological TNM Staging *based on grade as a prognostic factor* need to capture the highest overall grade found for that patient.

Reference: <http://cancerbulletin.facs.org/forums/forum/ajcc-tnm-staging-8th-edition/general-questions-for-8th-edition/general-questions-for-8th-edition-aa/91385-2018-grade-rules-and-tnm-staging>