



ORAL PRESENTATION

Cancer histopathology datasets - development and implementation

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Background

The Royal College of Pathologists helps to define the standards to which UK cancer centres should operate. The cancer pathology datasets provide a succinct summary of the important prognostic information to be included in cancer histopathology reports accompanied by guidance on specimen dissection and the terminology for recording microscopic features. This presentation outlines some of the features that contribute to the general acceptability and use of cancer pathology datasets.

General acceptability

The datasets are intended to help pathologists in their every day work and should not impose additional burdens on a busy diagnostic practice. The datasets should be well-written and provide authoritative guidance on appropriate diagnostic standards. Before a dataset is published on the College website, a formal consultation with surgeons, oncologists, cancer registries and histopathologists is undertaken to ensure that the standards are achievable in laboratories across the United Kingdom.

Dataset development

The College commissions experienced pathologists to produce each dataset to a standard format which includes clearly defined **core data items** that evidence indicates are required for optimal patient management and prognosis and **non-core, data items** that are included in a comprehensive report or to meet local clinical or research requirements. Quality assurance of the guidelines is monitored by the standards of the AGREE Collaboration. A national approach to standards of pathology laboratory software will encourage the incorporation of structured

data acquisition and storage into laboratory information systems. Core pathology data form part of the National Cancer Dataset and clinical guidelines, encouraging pathologists to provide the data in routine practice, thereby facilitating clinical audit and the transmission of data to other clinical systems.

Summary

The cancer datasets published by the Royal College of Pathologists are an accepted quality standard for the delivery of cancer services. This is largely due to the enthusiasm, experience and wisdom of the authors and clear definitions of data items. The challenges for the future include keeping the datasets up to date, the incorporation of molecular data and the implementation of IT systems that will allow the multifunctional use of pathology data as the basis of modern cancer care.

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