

Friday, 04 September 2009

FAO UK Gynaecological Oncology Community

Dear Colleague

Re: UK Implementation of new FIGO Staging systems.

You may be aware that FIGO has published revised staging systems for endometrial, cervical and vulval cancer, and introduced a new staging system for uterine sarcomas. The FIGO executive board ratified these documents in September 2008, but largely the UK gynae oncology community only became aware of the changes following publication of two papers, detailing the new staging systems, in the International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics this year^{1,2}. Copies of the new staging documents have been distributed via cancer and pathology networks. They are referenced below and are circulated with this document.

The Gynaecology Clinical Reference Group (CRG) of the National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN) is a multidisciplinary group representing stakeholder organisations involved in the delivery of gynaecological oncology care in the UK. The group is tasked with overseeing the coordination and collation of valid gynaecological oncology data, derived from multiple sources including Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), clinical audits and cancer registries. The CRG membership includes the current president / chair of the British Gynaecological Cancer Society (BGCS), the National Gynae NSSG Leads group representing the Cancer Networks, the British Association of Gynaecological Pathologists and the National Association of Gynaecological Oncology Nurses. The Royal Colleges, clinical audit programmes, the Cervical Screening Programme, the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI), gynaecological cancer charities and users are also represented. The Trent Cancer Registry is the lead cancer registry for gynaecological oncology and as such is an integral part of the CRG, represented by the Director and Associate Director.

The NCIN Gynaecology CRG is concerned about the impact that an ad hoc introduction of the revised FIGO staging may have on the collection of centralised gynaecological oncology data. National data would be impossible to interpret and comparisons between networks and centres would be compromised if a mix of old and new FIGO staging were utilised during 2009



and 2010. We understand that some cancer centres and networks have already changed to the new FIGO staging systems; however it is not clear if their respective cancer registries have appreciated this change. Ideally we would like to ensure that all cancer registries in the UK amend their databases concurrently, and that the cancer networks, multidisciplinary teams and cancer registry clerks are all fully informed of the new staging criteria and a unified changeover date. Network Site Specific Groups (NSSGs) will need to review guidelines to assess whether amendments to management pathways are necessary, particularly in relation to the revised endometrial cancer guidelines. Additional work needs to be done by multi-disciplinary teams, cancer charities and user groups to amend patient information leaflets and where appropriate educate patients and carers on the impact of the change in cancer staging.

To enable the above and ensure a co-ordinated changeover, the NCIN Gynaecology CRG proposes that the UK gynae oncology community formally changes from the old FIGO staging to the new FIGO staging system on January 1, 2010. Where the change has already been made, we urge networks to liaise with their cancer registry to clarify arrangements, and we urge caution in interpretation of staging data where both “old” and “new” staging systems may be utilised. **For networks still utilising the “old” FIGO staging, we suggest that until December 31 the old FIGO stage for each case should continue to be utilised in the official cancer centre / cancer network databases for uploading to the cancer registries.** However, the CRG suggests that teams start to assign both “old” and “new” FIGO stages to each case, to facilitate the change over at the end of the year.

Kindest regards



Mr Andy Nordin
Chair, NCIN Gynaecology CRG



References:

1. FIGO Committee On Gynecologic Oncology. Revised FIGO staging for carcinoma of the vulva, cervix, and endometrium. *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* 105 (2009) 103–104
2. FIGO Committee On Gynecologic Oncology. FIGO staging for uterine sarcomas. *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* 104 (2009) 179.

Distribution List:

1. Cancer Registries
2. British Association of Gynaecological Pathologists
3. British Gynaecological Cancer Society
4. National Gynae NSSG Leads group
5. National Association of Gynaecological Oncology Nurses
6. Cancer Networks
7. Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists

