



Lesson 5

Terminology- Difference Between Physician and Registrar



- Writing style of AJCC manual
 - Conversational
 - Journal or book style
 - Not a legal document where words are absolutely precise
 - General guidelines
 - Most common scenarios
 - Not always strict rules
 - Allow for variability seen in medical practice
- Writing style of registry manuals
 - Attribute specific meaning to words
 - Strict rules
 - Need for consistency in data collection
 - Parse words for definitive meaning
 - Definitions constructed by registry community
 - Not necessarily consistent with dictionary definitions

No Ambiguous Terminology for AJCC

- AJCC does not use registry ambiguous terminology lists from
 - STORE
 - SEER manuals
 - Summary Stage
 - Out of date manuals, standards
 - Cancer Program Manual 1980's
 - Cancer Program Standards 1990's, early 2000
 - Data Acquisition Manual (DAM)
 - Registry Operations and Data Standards (ROADS)
 - FORDS
 - Collaborative Stage
- Local, state, regional, and national documentation
- Personal memory of past use

Examples: Why NOT to Use

- Example of term definitions
 - 1996 Volume I: Cancer Program Standards defined terms
 - Must, shall, required: mandatory and acceptable
 - Should: commonly accepted, allow effective alternatives
 - May: acceptable alternative but not preferred
- If physician uses “may”
 - Do not apply definition from your memory of other manuals
- Use common sense or dictionary definition for term
 - Permission requested or granted
 - Usual or typical interpretation of the word
- If employer says “you may have the day off”
 - You should not take the day off, it is not preferred?
 - You will take the day off

Ambiguous Terms – A Secret Club

- Secret handshake that only registrars know
- No-one can join our exclusive secret club
 - Isolates registrars from medical world
 - Isolates registrars from reality
- Not in keeping with
 - Current medical practice
 - Standard dictionary definitions
 - General usage of these terms
 - Common phrasing by physicians
- Jeopardizes communication with physicians
 - Physicians are not aware of these definitions
 - Must be used by every physician worldwide for accuracy
 - Unrealistic to teach these arbitrary definitions to physicians

Ambiguous Terms Threaten Registrars

- Use of ambiguous terminology
 - Computer could identify ambiguous terminology
 - Automated data collection based on terminology
 - Replace registrar jobs
 - Threaten registrars place in the cancer team
- Value of registrars is their ability to
 - Interpret terminology
 - Understand the context
 - Decipher the meaning in light of all information
 - Perform critical thinking
- Registrars are capable – they do not need this crutch
- Using the terms can lead to wrong conclusions

- Cannot use one word or one report in isolation
 - Assess intent, interpretation, perception
 - Do not over analyze or parse word choices
- Need to evaluate the whole picture
 - Reports list all abnormal findings, not just cancer involvement
 - Understand other medical causes for abnormalities
 - Look for further testing ordered to investigate
- Review
 - Consults
 - Guidelines from NCCN, ASCO, others
 - Treatment plans, which can infer stage
- Rely on physician's medical judgment

- Not practical for worldwide medical community to agree on
 - Definitions of imprecise words
 - Usage of descriptions for equivocal findings
 - Use consistent word style, not allowing variation by
 - Region of the country or world
 - Medical training
 - Personal style
- Registrars are capable of
 - Understanding the intent
 - Analyzing the information
 - Applying critical thinking
 - Deducing the physician's conclusions
 - Asking questions of the physician when there is doubt

- Interpretation of 8th edition writing style
 - Describes usual or common case scenario
 - Describes guidelines and best practice
 - Allows for variation seen in medical practice
 - Do not apply registry definitions

- Ambiguous terminology lists are not valid or necessary
 - Best NOT to use for AJCC staging
 - Rarely needed as other information is available



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Thank You