

# A pictorial summary of the changes to lung cancer staging with the new TNM 9 edition

Dr H Perry and Dr N Jawad

## T classification - no change

## N classification

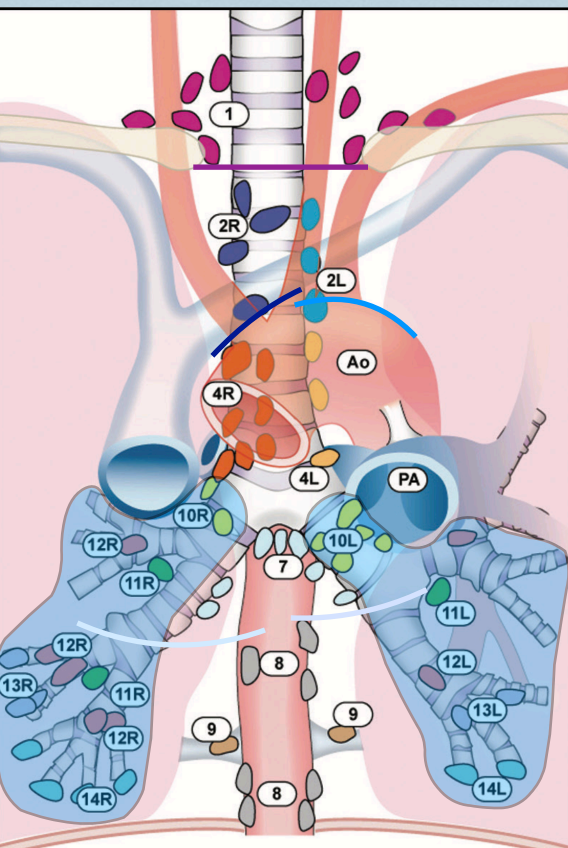
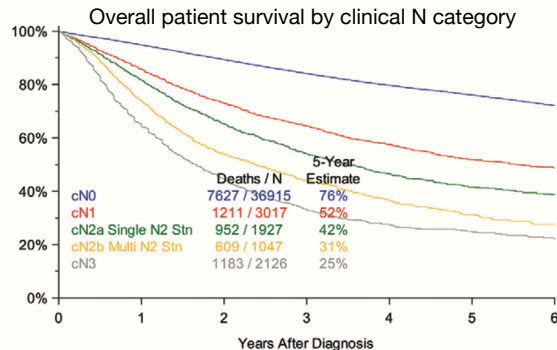
NX Regional lymph nodes cannot be assessed  
N0 No regional lymph node metastasis  
N1 Metastasis in ipsilateral peribronchial and/or ipsilateral hilar and/or intrapulmonary lymph nodes, including involvement by direct extension  
**N2 Metastasis in ipsilateral mediastinal and/or subcarinal lymph node(s)**  
N3 Metastasis in contralateral mediastinal, contralateral hilar, ipsilateral or contralateral scalene or supraclavicular lymph node(s)

N2a – Single N2 station involvement  
N2b – Multiple N2 station involvement

## M classification

M0 No distant metastasis  
M1 Distant metastasis  
M1a Tumour with pleural or pericardial nodules or malignant pleural or pericardial effusions, separate tumour nodule(s) in a contralateral lobe  
M1b Single extrathoracic metastasis in a single organ system  
**M1c Multiple extrathoracic metastases**  
o M1c1 Multiple extrathoracic metastases in a single organ system  
o M1c2 Multiple extrathoracic metastases in multiple organ systems

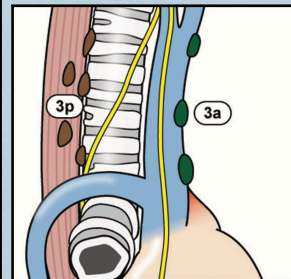
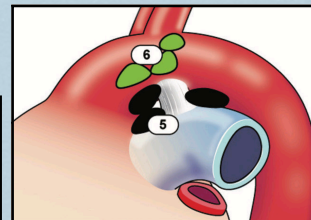
N2 has been divided into N2a single station and N2b multiple station ipsilateral mediastinal and/or subcarinal lymph node involvement. The change is due to an 11% improved patient survival at 5 years with N2a vs N2b. This puts increased importance on accurately reporting mediastinal lymph node groups as this could change staging.



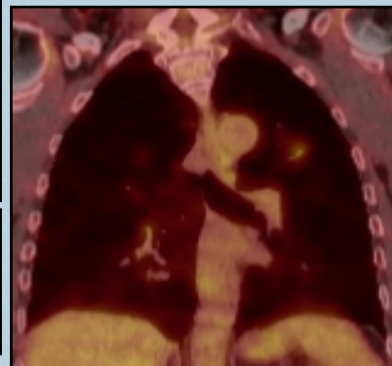
### Lymph node group divisions of note

- 1 vs 2R & 2L Upper border of manubrium
- 2R vs 4R Intersection of caudal margin of left brachiocephalic vein with trachea
- 2L vs 4L Superior border of aortic arch
- 3a R Anterior to SVC  
3a L Anterior to L common carotid A
- 3p Retrotracheal  
All group 3 between lung apex
- 4L vs 5, 5 lateral to ligamentum arteriosum
- 7R vs 8R Inferior border of bronchus intermedius
- 7L vs 8L Upper border of left lower lobe bronchus

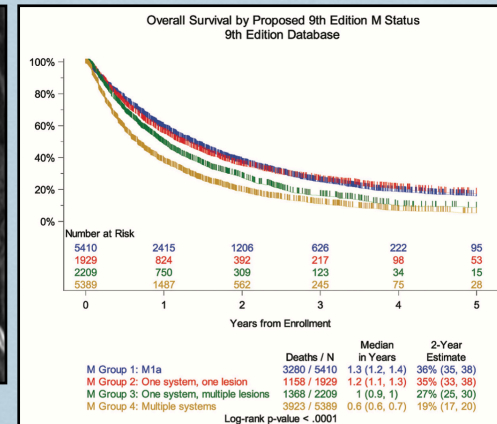
Groups 10 - 14 N1 if ipsilateral, N3 if contralateral  
Groups 2 - 9 N2 if ipsilateral, N3 if contralateral  
Group 1 always N3



N2b - 2R, 4R & 7 right upper and lower paratracheal and subcarinal lymph node involvement



N2a - two group 4L; left lower paratracheal lymph node involvement



The International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) global study of 14,937 patients with metastatic NSCLC showed median survival of 1 year with stage M1c1 and 7 months with M1c2, or 27% survival at 2 years with M1c1 vs 19% with M1c2 disease.

### References

IASLC Staging Manual in Thoracic Oncology 3rd Edition  
<https://www.iaslc.org/research-education/publications-resources-guidelines/staging-manual-thoracic-oncology-3rd-edition>  
Fong KM, Rosenthal A, Giroux DJ, et al. The International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer staging project for lung cancer: Proposals for the revision of the M descriptors in the forthcoming ninth edition of the TNM classification of lung cancer. J Thorac Oncol. 2024; 19(5):786-802.  
[https://www.jto.org/article/S1556-0864\(24\)00060-1/fulltext](https://www.jto.org/article/S1556-0864(24)00060-1/fulltext)