

Entering Essential TNM in databases

For pragmatic reasons, it is acceptable to use the already existing fields to code the TNM stage group and TNM components if they exist, and to enter the codes used for Essential TNM as described above: M+, M-, R+, R-, R2, R1, A, A2, A1, L, L2, L1. Depending on the extension of the tumour, the number of components to be entered into the database will vary; if there is evidence of distant metastasis, it may be only M+.

For databases that do not allow varying code length (one vs two characters), two characters should be used for all codes. In this situation, it is recommended to code A, L, and X as AX, LX, and XX, respectively. It is recommended to include a dictionary according to the description in Table 1, so that the user can select the required code from a menu.

Table 1. Recommended codes for T, N, and M

Classification	T		N		M		
	Stage	Code	Stage	Code	Stage	Code	
TNM	TX	X	NX	X	MX	X	
	T1	1	N0	0	M0	0	
	T1a	1A	N1	1	M1	1	
	T1b	1B	N1a	1A			
	T1c	1C	N1b	1B			
	T2	2	N1c	1C			
	T2a	2A	N2	2			
	T2b	2B	N2a	2A			
	T2c	2C	N2b	2B			
	T3	3	N2c	2C			
	T3a	3A	N3	3			
	T3b	3B	N3a	3A			
	T3c	3C	N3b	3B			
	T4	4	N3c	3C			
	T4a	4A					
	T4b	4B					
	T4c	4C					
	Essential TNM	A	AX	R+	R+	MX	X
		A1	A1	R-	R-	M+	M+
A2		A2	R1	R1	M-	M-	
L		LX	R2	R2			
L1		L1					
L2		L2					

Note: MX, which is not used in the eighth edition of the TNM classification (Brierley et al., 2017), is included in case it is mentioned in a clinical record.