

Microsatellites (Core)

In the 8th edition of the American Joint Commission on Cancer (AJCC) melanoma staging system¹ the definition of microsatellite was clarified and refined. A microscopic satellite is any nest of metastatic tumour cells discontinuous from the primary tumour (but not separated only by fibrosis or inflammation). There is no longer a minimum size threshold or distance from the primary tumour that defines a microsatellite. Fibrous scarring and/or inflammation between an apparently separate nodule and the primary tumour (rather than normal stroma) may represent regression of the intervening tumour; if these findings are present, the nodule is considered to be an extension of the primary tumour and not a microsatellite. The terms 'microsatellites', 'satellites' and 'in-transit metastases' probably represent biologically identical processes with identical (worse) prognostic implications.²⁻⁵ Microsatellites, satellites and in-transit metastases are included in the same prognostic group by the AJCC and are classified as stage III melanoma in the 8th edition of the AJCC melanoma staging system.⁵⁻⁸

References

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8 *AJCC (American Joint Committee on Cancer) (2002). AJCC Cancer Staging Manual, 6th edition. Springer-Verlag, New York.*