

Canadian Breast Cancer Initiative

Clinical Practice Guidelines

For The Care & Treatment of Breast Cancer

Summer 1995

Introduction

Health Canada is committed to supporting the development of clinical practice guidelines, one of a number of activities comprising the Canadian Breast Cancer Initiative. To this end, a Steering Committee has been struck to oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive set of clinical practice guidelines for the treatment of breast cancer and the care of breast cancer patients.

The following definition of guidelines has been adopted: Systematically developed statements to help physicians and patients make decisions about appropriate health care for specific clinical circumstances. Guidelines will assist the patient, her family, and the treatment team to arrive at the most clinically effective and personally acceptable care and treatment decisions.

The Steering Committee is also responsible for guideline dissemination and evaluation. Each guideline will be available in English and French and whenever necessary, a special "user-friendly," non-technical version will be developed.

Steering Committee

There are 20 Committee members representing women with breast cancer, health care professionals, educational and licensing bodies, government and non-government cancer agencies, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Health Services (ACHS) and Health Canada. The Committee is chaired by Dr. Maurice McGregor. A membership list is enclosed.

Process for Guideline Development

Each guideline is being developed by designated authors who are recognized experts in the field. Guidelines will, as far as possible, be evidence-based and the quality of the evidence will be evaluated. Where evidence is not available, guidelines will, of necessity, depend on expert opinion. Draft guidelines will be submitted to external reviewers and circulated widely to external critics (e.g., provincial cancer agencies, patient associations) in an extensive consultation process.

* Committee to Advise the Public Health Service on Clinical Practice Guidelines, Institute of Medicine: *Clinical Practice Guidelines: Directions for a New Program*, Natl Acad Pr, Washington, 1990: 38.

** The ACHS is one of several advisory committees that reports to the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health. It advises the Deputy Ministers on the utilization, appropriateness, quality and effectiveness of health services.

Topics for Guideline Development

At its initial meeting in November 1994, the Steering Committee selected the first 10 topics for guideline development. Additional topics are being considered. Following are details of the 10 topics selected:

Topic 1: Management of the Lump

- Author:** Dr. R.G. Margoese (Oncology Centre, Jewish General Hospital, Montreal)
- Guideline Task Force:** Drs. Cantin, Levine, Little, Beaulieu
- Objectives:** Guidelines will address how to determine the nature of the “dominant lump” and the necessary investigations to establish a diagnosis.

Topic 2: Indications for Adjuvant Systemic Therapy for Women With Pathologically Established Node-Negative Breast Cancer

- Author:** Dr. A.D. Ginsburg (Kingston Regional Cancer Centre)
- Guideline Task Force:** Drs. Cantin, Levine, Little
- Objectives:** Guidelines will address the essential pathologic information necessary for deciding on adjuvant systemic therapy for node-negative breast cancer, and the indications for chemotherapy, tamoxifen, and ovarian ablation.

Topic 3: Ductal Carcinoma In-Situ (DCIS)

- Author:** Dr. P. Craighead (Tom Baker Cancer Centre, Calgary)
- Guideline Task Force:** Drs. Nolan, Lees, Aitken
- Objectives:** Guidelines will address the clinical radiologic and pathologic information necessary for management decisions for the patient with DCIS; indications for mastectomy for DCIS; indications for excision, radiation therapy or tamoxifen for women who choose breast conservation; and whether axillary dissection should be carried out.

Topic 4: Pain Management for Breast Cancer Patients

- Author:** Dr. N. MacDonald (Centre for Bioethics, Clinical Research Institute of Montreal)
- Guideline Task Force:** Drs. Firth, Graydon
- Objectives:** Guidelines will consider the different kinds of pain that may be encountered; the most effective medications, routes of administration, and dosage levels; the principal side-effects of medications and how they can be minimized; and whether there are guidelines concerning psychological, social, or spiritual help.

Topic 5: Breast Conservation or Mastectomy

- Author:** Dr. R.G. Margolese (Oncology Centre, Jewish General Hospital, Montreal)
- Guideline Task Force:** Drs. Nolan, Levine, Thain
- Objectives:** Guidelines will address the indications for mastectomy, the essential requirements for the pathologic assessment of a lumpectomy specimen, specific health gains to be expected from each option, and therapeutic consequences of each option such as the need for radiation.

Topic 6: Axillary Dissection

- Author:** Dr. D. McCready (Women's College Hospital, Toronto)
- Guideline Task Force:** Drs. Cantin, Thain, Deschênes
- Objectives:** Guidelines will address the indications for axillary dissection, the recommended technique, the essential requirements for pathologic assessment of an axillary dissection specimen, the health benefits and adverse health effects of each option considered, and indications for axillary radiation.

Topic 7: Follow-Up

- Author:** Dr. K. Murphy (B.C. Cancer Agency, Vancouver)
- Guideline Task Force:** Drs. Bowman, Lees, Hugi, Graydon
- Objectives:** Guidelines will address who should be principally responsible for follow-up, frequency of follow-up, types of examinations or tests, special features that require more frequent follow-up, and health benefits.

Topic 8: Indications for Radiotherapy After Breast Conservation Surgery

- Author:** Dr. T. Whelan (OCTRF, Hamilton Regional Cancer Centre)
- Guideline Task Force:** Drs. Thain, Olivotto, Firth
- Objectives:** Guidelines will consider the indications for radiation therapy following breast conservation surgery; the recommended/acceptable, time/dose fractions; the indications for boost to the primary site; and appropriateness of omitting radiation therapy.

Topic 9: Mammographically Detected Lesions

- Author:** Dr. A. Robidoux (Département de Chirurgie, Hôpital Hôtel Dieu, Montréal)
- Guideline Task Force:** Drs. Cantin, Aitken, Deschênes
- Objectives:** Guidelines will address the steps to be taken to verify radiological diagnosis, indications for stereotactic biopsy, preferable method of fine wire or other localization techniques, handling of the specimen, and requirements for the pathology report of biopsy specimens.

Topic 10: Indications for Adjuvant Systemic Therapy for Women With Pathologically Demonstrated Node-Positive Breast Cancer

- Author:** Dr. S. O'Reilly (B.C. Cancer Agency, Vancouver)
- Guideline Task Force:** Drs. Deschênes, Levine, Olivotto
- Objectives:** Guidelines will address the indications for chemotherapy, tamoxifen, and ovarian ablation; what is considered "standard" therapy; probable benefits of each recommended option; and probable/possible adverse effects of each option.

For further information, contact:

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Lignes directrices pour la pratique clinique*

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Steering Committee

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*Chair: Dr. Maurice McGregor
(Conseil d'évaluation des technologies de la santé du Québec)*

- **Alberta Cancer Board**

Dr. Alan Lees
(Cross Cancer Institute)

- **Manitoba Cancer Treatment
and Research Foundation**

Dr. David Bowman

- **The Ontario Cancer Treatment and
Research Foundation**

Dr. Mark Levine
(Hamilton Regional Cancer Centre)

- **Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation**

Dr. L. Arthur Firth
(Allan Blair Cancer Centre)

- **British Columbia Cancer Agency**

Dr. Ivo Olivotto

- **Royal College of Physicians and
Surgeons of Canada**

Dr. Jacques Cantin
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- **Newfoundland Cancer Treatment and
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Dr. Kishore Thain

- **Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation
of Nova Scotia**

Dr. Maureen Nolan
(Nova Scotia Cancer Centre)

- **The Federal/Provincial/Territorial
Advisory Committee on Health Services**

Ms. Janet Davidson
(Alberta Health)

Dr. Judy Caines
(Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program)

- **Canadian Nurses Association**

Dr. Jane E. Graydon
(Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto)

- **College of Family Physicians of Canada**

Dr. Marie-Dominique Beaulieu
(Department of Family Medicine, Hôpital
Notre-Dame)

- **Comité consultatif sur le cancer du Québec**

Dr. Luc Deschênes
(Hôpital du St-Sacrement)

- **Canadian Medical Association**

Dr. Susan Aitken
(Ontario Breast Cancer Screening Program)

- **Federation of Canadian Medical
Licensing Authorities**

Dr. Cameron Little
(Provincial Medical Board of Nova Scotia)

- **National Cancer Institute of Canada**

Dr. Anthony Fields
(Cross Cancer Institute)

- **Canadian Breast Cancer Network**

Dr. Maria Hugi

- **Health Canada**

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