



# Protocol for the Examination of Specimens From Patients With Tumors of the Central Nervous System\*

Version: Brain/Spinal Cord 3.1.0.2

Protocol Posting Date: December 2014

This protocol is **NOT** required for accreditation purposes

\*This protocol applies to primary neoplasms of the brain and spinal cord

The following tumor types should **NOT** be reported using this protocol:

| Tumor type  |
|---|
| Lymphoma (consider the Hodgkin or non-Hodgkin Lymphoma protocols) |
| Primary bone tumors (consider the Primary Bone tumor protocol)    |
| Metastatic tumors   |

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## Accreditation Requirements

The use of this protocol is recommended for clinical care purposes, but is not required for accreditation purposes.

**CAP Laboratory Accreditation Program Protocol Required Use Date: Not applicable**

## Important Note

There is no American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) pTNM classification system for primary central nervous system neoplasms. The World Health Organization (WHO) grading system is recommended.

**Surgical Pathology Cancer Case Summary**

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Protocol posting date: December 2014

**BRAIN/SPINAL CORD/NERVE: Biopsy/Resection****Note: This case summary is recommended for reporting CNS neoplasms, but is not required for accreditation purposes.****Select a single response unless otherwise indicated.****Tumor Site (select all that apply) (Note A)**

- Skull  
+ Specify precise location, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dura  
+ Specify precise location, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Leptomeninges  
+ Specify precise location, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Brain
- Cerebral lobes (specify precise location, if known: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Basal ganglia
  - Thalamus
  - Hypothalamus
  - Pineal
  - Cerebellum
  - Cerebellopontine angle
  - Other (specify, if known: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Sellar/suprasellar/pituitary
- Cranial nerve  
+ Specify I-XII, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Ventricle  
+ Specify precise location, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Brain stem  
+ Specify precise location, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Spine (vertebral column)  
+ Specify precise location, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Spinal Cord  
+ Specify precise location, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Spinal nerve root(s)  
+ Specify precise location, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Peripheral nerve  
+ Specify site, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Ganglion  
+ Specify site, if known: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Not specified

**Laterality (Note A)**

- Right
- Left
- Midline
- Bilateral
- Not specified
- Not applicable

**Procedure (Note B)**

- Open biopsy
- Resection
- Stereotactic biopsy
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Not specified

**Histologic Type (WHO classification of tumors of the central nervous system) (Note C)**

- Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Cannot be determined

**Histologic Grade (WHO histologic grade) (Note D)**

- Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Not Applicable
  - Cannot be determined

**+ Specimen Size, gross description (Note E)**

- +  Greatest dimension: \_\_\_ cm
- +  Additional dimensions: \_\_\_ x \_\_\_ cm (for fragmented tissue, an aggregate size may be given)
- +  Cannot be determined (see Comment)

**+ Specimen Handling (select all that apply) (Note F)**

- +  Squash/smear/touch preparation
- +  Frozen section
- +  Tissue for electron microscopy
- +  Frozen tissue
- +  Unfrozen, formalin-fixed for permanent paraffin sections
- +  Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- +  Not specified

**+ Margins (malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumor only) (Note G)**

- +  Not Applicable
- +  Cannot be assessed
- +  Margins not involved by tumor
  - + Distance of tumor from closest margin: \_\_\_ cm
  - + Specify, if possible: \_\_\_\_\_
- +  Margins involved by tumor
  - + Specify, if possible: \_\_\_\_\_

**+ Ancillary Studies, if applicable (select all that apply) (Note H)**

*Note: For biomarker reporting for gliomas and embryonal tumors, the CAP CNS Biomarker Template should be used. Pending biomarker studies should be listed in the Comments section of this report.*

- + Designate block for future studies: \_\_\_\_\_

**+ Special Stains**

- + Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- +  None performed

**+ Immunohistochemistry**

- + Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- +  None performed

**+ Electron Microscopy**

- + Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- +  None performed

**+ Molecular Genetic Studies**

+ Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

+ \_\_\_ None performed

+ \_\_\_ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**+ Additional Pathologic Findings**

+ Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**+ History of Previous Tumor/Familial Syndrome (Note I)**

+ \_\_\_ None known

+ \_\_\_ Known (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

+ \_\_\_ Not specified

**+ Neuroimaging Findings (Note J)**

+ Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

+ \_\_\_ Not available

**+ Focality (Note A, J)**

+ \_\_\_ Multifocal

+ \_\_\_ Unifocal

+ \_\_\_ Cannot be determined

**+ Presection Treatment (select all that apply) (Note K)**

+ \_\_\_ No therapy

+ \_\_\_ Chemotherapy

+ \_\_\_ Radiation therapy

+ \_\_\_ Corticosteroids

+ \_\_\_ Embolization

+ \_\_\_ Therapy performed, type not specified

+ \_\_\_ Unknown

**+ Treatment Effect (Note K)**

+ \_\_\_ Not identified

+ \_\_\_ Present

+ Specify percent of tumor that is necrotic: \_\_\_\_%

+ \_\_\_ Cannot be determined

**+ Comment(s)**

## Explanatory Notes

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### A. Primary Tumor Site, Laterality, and Focality

Since the anatomic site of a neoplasm may correlate with tumor type and prognosis, it should be recorded, if known.

- For skull location, specify bone involved, such as frontal, parietal, temporal, occipital, etc, if known. The College of American Pathologists (CAP) cancer protocol for bone<sup>1</sup> should be used for primary tumors of bone (Note L).
- For dural location, indicate cerebral convexity/lobe, falx, tentorium, posterior fossa, sphenoid wing, skull base, spinal, or other, if known.
- For leptomeningeal location, indicate cerebral convexity/lobe, posterior fossa, spinal, or other, if known.
- For cerebral lobe location, indicate frontal, temporal, parietal, or occipital lobe, if known. For a deep gray matter location, indicate basal ganglia, thalamus, or hypothalamus.
- For an intraventricular location, indicate lateral, third, fourth, or aqueduct, if known.
- For a brain stem location, indicate midbrain, pons, or medulla, if known.
- For spine (vertebral bone), spinal cord, spinal root or spinal ganglion, indicate level (eg, C5, T2, L3), if known. The CAP cancer protocol for bone<sup>1</sup> should be used for primary tumors of bone.

The laterality of a neoplasm should be indicated as involving the left or right side of the central nervous system (CNS) structure. In some instances, such as tumors arising in the pineal, pituitary, third ventricular, and other locations, the tumor will be situated in the midline. A tumor would be considered bilateral if it involved both sides of the brain, such as glioblastoma extending through the corpus callosum to involve the left and right hemispheres. The focality of a lesion should be indicated, if possible. Multifocality implies that multiple, noncontiguous lesions are noted on neuroimaging, such as might be seen in primary CNS lymphoma. A solitary lesion would be considered unifocal.

### B. Procedure

It is useful to know if the specimen was procured by open craniotomy or stereotactic biopsy. Since tumors may be heterogeneous, adequate sampling is an issue. The reliability of the prognostic information derived from such specimens may vary depending on how the specimen was obtained.

### C. Histologic Type

Classification should be made according to the WHO classification of tumors of the nervous system<sup>2,3</sup> whenever possible. The list below contains WHO 2007 diagnostic entities:

#### Astrocytic Tumors

- Pilocytic astrocytoma (WHO grade I)
- Pilomyxoid astrocytoma (WHO grade II)
- Subependymal giant cell astrocytoma (WHO grade I)
- Pleomorphic xanthoastrocytoma (WHO grade II)
- Pleomorphic xanthoastrocytoma with anaplastic features (WHO grade not assigned)
- Diffuse astrocytoma (WHO grade II)
  - Fibrillary astrocytoma (WHO grade II)
  - Protoplasmic astrocytoma (WHO grade II)
  - Gemistocytic astrocytoma (WHO grade II)
- Anaplastic astrocytoma (WHO grade III)
- Glioblastoma (WHO grade IV)
  - Giant cell glioblastoma (WHO grade IV)
  - Gliosarcoma (WHO grade IV)
- Gliomatosis cerebri (usually WHO grade III; diagnosis requires clinical-pathological correlation)
- Astrocytoma, not otherwise characterized (WHO grades I-IV)

#### Oligodendroglial Tumors

- Oligodendroglioma (WHO grade II)
- Anaplastic oligodendroglioma (WHO grade III)

Oligoastrocytic Tumors (mixed glioma)

Oligoastrocytoma (WHO grade II)  
Anaplastic oligoastrocytoma (WHO grade III)

Ependymal Tumors

Subependymoma (WHO grade I)  
Myxopapillary ependymoma (WHO grade I)  
Ependymoma (WHO grade II)  
    Cellular ependymoma (WHO grade II)  
    Papillary ependymoma (WHO grade II)  
    Clear cell ependymoma (WHO grade II)  
    Tancytic ependymoma (WHO grade II)  
Anaplastic ependymoma (WHO grade III)

Choroid Plexus Tumors

Choroid plexus papilloma (WHO grade I)  
Atypical choroid plexus papilloma (WHO grade II)  
Choroid plexus carcinoma (WHO grade III)

Other Neuroepithelial Tumors

Astroblastoma (WHO grade not assigned)  
Chordoid glioma of the third ventricle (WHO grade II)  
Angiocentric glioma (WHO grade I)

Neuronal and Mixed Neuronal-Glial Tumors

Dysplastic gangliocytoma of cerebellum (Lhermitte-Duclos) (WHO grade I)  
Desmoplastic infantile astrocytoma/ganglioglioma (WHO grade I)  
Dysembryoplastic neuroepithelial tumor (WHO grade I)  
Gangliocytoma (WHO grade I)  
Ganglioglioma (WHO grade I)  
Anaplastic ganglioglioma (WHO grade III)  
Central neurocytoma (WHO grade II)  
Extraventricular neurocytoma (WHO grade II)  
Cerebellar liponeurocytoma (WHO grade II)  
Papillary glioneuronal tumor (PGNT) (WHO grade I)  
Rosette-forming glioneuronal tumor of the fourth ventricle (RGNT) (WHO grade I)  
Paraganglioma of the spinal cord (WHO grade I)

Tumors of the Pineal Region

Pineal parenchymal tumors  
    Pineocytoma (WHO grade I)  
    Pineal parenchymal tumor of intermediate differentiation (WHO II-III)  
    Pineoblastoma (WHO grade IV)  
Papillary tumor of the pineal region (WHO grade II-III)

Embryonal Tumors

- Medulloblastoma, not otherwise characterized (WHO grade IV)
  - Desmoplastic/nodular medulloblastoma (WHO grade IV)
  - Medulloblastoma with extensive nodularity (WHO grade IV)
  - Anaplastic medulloblastoma (WHO grade IV)
  - Large cell medulloblastoma (WHO grade IV)
- Central nervous system (CNS) primitive neuroectodermal tumor (PNET) (WHO grade IV)
  - Medulloepithelioma (WHO grade IV)
  - Neuroblastoma (WHO grade IV)
  - Ganglioneuroblastoma (WHO grade IV)
  - Ependymblastoma (WHO grade IV)
- Atypical teratoid/rhabdoid tumor (WHO grade IV)

Tumors of Cranial and Paraspinal Nerves

- Schwannoma (WHO grade I)
  - Cellular (WHO grade I)
  - Plexiform (WHO grade I)
  - Melanotic (WHO grade I)
- Neurofibroma (WHO grade I)
  - Plexiform (WHO grade I)
- Perineurioma (WHO grade I)
  - Intraneural perineurioma (WHO grade I)
  - Soft tissue perineurioma (WHO grade I)
- Malignant perineurioma (WHO grade III)
- Ganglioneuroma (WHO grade I)
- Malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumor (MPNST) (WHO grade II-IV)
  - Epithelioid (WHO grade II-IV)
  - MPNST with divergent mesenchymal and/or epithelial differentiation (WHO grade II-IV)

Tumors of the Meninges/Meningothelial Cells

- Meningioma (WHO grade I)
  - Meningothelial (WHO grade I)
  - Fibrous (fibroblastic) (WHO grade I)
  - Transitional (mixed) (WHO grade I)
  - Psammomatous (WHO grade I)
  - Angiomatous (WHO grade I)
  - Microcystic (WHO grade I)
  - Secretory (WHO grade I)
  - Lymphoplasmacyte-rich (lymphoplasmacytic) (WHO grade I)
  - Metaplastic (WHO grade I)
- Atypical meningioma (WHO grade II)
- Clear cell meningioma (WHO grade II)
- Chordoid meningioma (WHO grade II)
- Anaplastic meningioma (WHO grade III)
- Papillary meningioma (WHO grade III)
- Rhabdoid meningioma (WHO grade III)

Mesenchymal (Nonmeningothelial) Tumors

*Note: The CAP cancer protocols for bone<sup>1</sup> and soft tissue<sup>4</sup> should be used for those tumors that are primary to bone and soft tissue, respectively (Note L).*

Lipoma  
Angiolipoma  
Hibernoma  
Liposarcoma (intracranial)  
Solitary fibrous tumor  
Fibrosarcoma  
Malignant fibrous histiocytoma  
Leiomyoma  
Leiomyosarcoma  
Rhabdomyoma  
Rhabdomyosarcoma  
Chondroma  
Chondrosarcoma  
Osteoma  
Osteosarcoma  
Osteochondroma  
Hemangioma  
Epithelioid hemangioendothelioma  
Hemangiopericytoma  
Anaplastic hemangiopericytoma  
Angiosarcoma  
Kaposi sarcoma  
Chordoma  
Mesenchymal, nonmeningothelial tumor, other (specify type, if possible)  
Sarcoma, primary CNS (specify type, if possible)

Primary Melanotic Tumors

Diffuse melanocytosis  
Melanocytoma  
Malignant melanoma  
Meningeal melanomatosis

Tumors of Uncertain Histogenesis

Hemangioblastoma (WHO grade I)

Lymphoma and Hematopoietic Tumors

Malignant lymphoma (specify type, if possible)  
Plasmacytoma  
Granulocytic sarcoma  
Hematopoietic neoplasm, other (specify type, if possible)

Germ Cell Tumors

Germinoma  
Embryonal carcinoma  
Yolk sac tumor  
Choriocarcinoma  
Teratoma, mature  
Teratoma, immature  
Teratoma with malignant transformation  
Malignant mixed germ cell tumor (specify components, eg, germinoma, embryonal, yolk sac, choriocarcinoma, teratoma)



Tumors of the Sellar Region

- Craniopharyngioma (WHO grade I)
- Craniopharyngioma, adamantinomatous (WHO grade I)
- Craniopharyngioma, papillary (WHO grade I)
- Granular cell tumor (WHO grade I)
- Pituicytoma (WHO grade I)
- Spindle cell oncocytoma (WHO grade I)
- Pituitary adenoma (specify nonfunctional or hormone expression, if known)
- Pituitary carcinoma
- Pituitary hyperplasia

Other/Nonclassifiable

- Other(s) (specify)
- Malignant neoplasm, type cannot be determined
- Pediatric low grade glioma (pLGG) not otherwise specified (NOS) (Grade I/II)

**D. Histologic Grade**

Below is a list of possible WHO grades for central nervous system tumors. The WHO grading<sup>2,3</sup> of some of the more common CNS tumors is shown in Table 1. There is no formal TNM-based classification and staging system for CNS tumors.

**WHO Grades for Tumors of the Nervous System**

- WHO grade I
- WHO grade II
- WHO grade III
- WHO grade IV
- WHO grade not assigned

**Table 1. WHO Grading System for Some of the More Common Tumors of the CNS**

| Tumor Group           | Tumor Type                          | Grade I | Grade II | Grade III | Grade IV |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Astrocytic tumors     | Diffuse astrocytoma                 |         | X        |           |          |
|                       | Anaplastic astrocytoma              |         |          | X         |          |
|                       | Glioblastoma                        |         |          |           | X        |
|                       | Pilocytic astrocytoma               | X       |          |           |          |
|                       | Pilomyxoid astrocytoma              |         | X        |           |          |
|                       | Subependymal giant cell astrocytoma | X       |          |           |          |
|                       | Pleomorphic xanthoastrocytoma       |         | X        |           |          |
| Oligodendrogliomas    | Oligodendroglioma                   |         | X        |           |          |
|                       | Anaplastic oligodendroglioma        |         |          | X         |          |
| Oligoastrocytomas     | Oligoastrocytoma                    |         | X        |           |          |
|                       | Anaplastic oligoastrocytoma         |         |          | X         |          |
| Ependymal tumors      | Ependymoma                          |         | X        |           |          |
|                       | Anaplastic ependymoma               |         |          | X         |          |
|                       | Subependymoma                       | X       |          |           |          |
|                       | Myxopapillary ependymoma            | X       |          |           |          |
| Choroid plexus tumors | Choroid plexus papilloma            | X       |          |           |          |
|                       | Atypical choroid plexus papilloma   |         | X        |           |          |

|                              |   |   |   |   |  |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
|                              | Choroid plexus carcinoma  |   |   | X |  |
| Other neuroepithelial tumors | Angiocentric glioma   | X |   |   |  |
|                              | Chordoid glioma of the third ventricle                            |   | X |   |  |
| Neuronal-glial tumors        | Gangliocytoma   | X |   |   |  |
|                              | Desmoplastic infantile ganglioglioma/ astrocytoma (DIG)           | X |   |   |  |
|                              | Dysembryoplastic neuroepithelial tumor (DNET)                     | X |   |   |  |
|                              | Ganglioglioma   | X |   |   |  |
|                              | Anaplastic ganglioglioma  |   |   | X |  |
|                              | Central neurocytoma   |   | X |   |  |
|                              | Extraventricular neurocytoma                                      |   | X |   |  |
|                              | Cerebellar liponeurocytoma  |   | X |   |  |
|                              | Papillary glioneuronal tumor (PGNT)                               | X |   |   |  |
|                              | Rosette-forming glioneuronal tumor of the fourth ventricle (RGNT) | X |   |   |  |
|                              | Paraganglioma of the spinal cord                                  | X |   |   |  |

| Tumor Group               | Tumor Type   | Grade I | Grade II | Grade III | Grade IV |
|---------------------------|--|---------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Pineal parenchymal tumors | Pineocytoma  | X       |          |           |          |
|                           | Pineal parenchymal tumor of intermediate differentiation |         | X        | X         |          |
|                           | Pineoblastoma  |         |          |           | X        |
|                           | Papillary tumor of the pineal region                     |         | X        | X         |          |
| Embryonal tumors          | Medulloblastoma  |         |          |           | X        |
|                           | CNS primitive neuroectodermal tumor                      |         |          |           | X        |
|                           | Medulloepithelioma                                       |         |          |           | X        |
|                           | Neuroblastoma  |         |          |           | X        |
|                           | Ganglioneuroblastoma                                     |         |          |           | X        |
|                           | Ependymoblastoma   |         |          |           | X        |
|                           | Atypical teratoid/rhabdoid tumor                         |         |          |           | X        |
| Cranial and peripheral    | Schwannoma   | X       |          |           |          |

|                                   |  |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
|                                   | Neurofibroma                                     | X |   |   |   |
|                                   | Perineurioma                                     | X | X | X |   |
|                                   | Malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumors (MPNST) |   | X | X | X |
| Meningeal tumors                  | Meningioma                                       | X |   |   |   |
|                                   | Atypical meningioma                              |   | X |   |   |
|                                   | Clear cell meningioma                            |   | X |   |   |
|                                   | Chordoid meningioma                              |   | X |   |   |
|                                   | Anaplastic meningioma                            |   |   | X |   |
|                                   | Papillary meningioma                             |   |   | X |   |
|                                   | Rhabdoid meningioma                              |   |   | X |   |
| Mesenchymal tumors <sup>8,9</sup> | <i>(Named as soft tissue counterpart)</i>        | X | X | X | X |
|                                   | Hemangiopericytoma                               |   | X | X |   |
| Tumors of uncertain histogenesis  | Hemangioblastoma                                 | X |   |   |   |

Tumor histology and grade are strong predictors of clinical behavior for astrocytomas and meningiomas. Tables 2 and 3 list the grading criteria for these common CNS tumor types.<sup>2,3</sup>

**Table 2. WHO Grading System for Diffuse Infiltrating Astrocytomas**

| WHO Grade | WHO Designation        | Histologic Criteria  |
|-----------|------------------------|--|
| II        | Diffuse astrocytoma    | Nuclear atypia   |
| III       | Anaplastic astrocytoma | Nuclear atypia and mitotic figures   |
| IV        | Glioblastoma           | Nuclear atypia, mitotic figures, and endothelial proliferation and/or necrosis |

**Table 3. WHO Grading of Meningiomas**

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>WHO grade I</b><br/>Benign meningioma</p>   |
| <p><b>WHO grade II</b><br/>Atypical meningioma<br/>Mitotic figures <math>\geq 4/10</math> high-power fields (HPF)<br/>or<br/>At least 3 of 5 parameters:<br/>Sheeting architecture (loss of whorling and/or fascicles)<br/>Small cell formation<br/>Macronucleoli<br/>Hypercellularity<br/>Spontaneous necrosis<br/>or<br/>Brain invasion<br/>or<br/>Clear cell meningioma<br/>or</p> |

|   |
|---|
| Chordoid meningioma   |
| <b>WHO grade III</b>  |
| Anaplastic (malignant) meningioma<br>Mitotic figures $\geq 20/10$ HPF<br><i>or</i><br>Frank anaplasia (sarcoma, carcinoma, or melanoma-like histology)<br><i>or</i><br>Papillary meningioma<br><i>or</i><br>Rhabdoid meningioma |

**E. Specimen Size**

For most CNS tumors, specimen size is not used for staging or grading. However, in heterogeneous lesions, tissue sampling may become important, and the size of the biopsy relative to the overall size of the lesion provides useful information concerning whether the sample is representative of the overall lesion. The total specimen size may not correspond to the tumor size within the specimen, and this discrepancy should be noted.

**F. Specimen Handling, Triage, and Special Procedures**

It may be necessary to divide biopsy/resection tissue into portions for the following procedures:

- Squash/smear/touch preparations
- Frozen sections
- Unfrozen, routine, permanent paraffin sections (essential to avoid artifacts of freezing tissue)
- Electron microscopy (retain a small portion in glutaraldehyde, or "embed and hold" for electron microscopy, if necessary)
- Frozen tissue, for possible molecular diagnostic studies (freeze fresh tissue as soon as possible and store)
- Other (microbiology, flow cytometry, cytogenetics, molecular diagnostics)

Since cytologic details are essential for interpreting CNS neoplasms, previously frozen tissue with its inherent artifacts is suboptimal, especially for subclassifying and grading gliomas. Recommendations for optimal freezing and frozen sections from CNS tissue have been published.<sup>5</sup> It is imperative to retain tissue that has not been previously frozen for permanent sections. Avoid using sponges in cassettes because they produce angular defects that resemble vascular/luminal spaces in the final sections. It is more appropriate to wrap small biopsies in lens paper or into tissue sacs prior to submitting in cassettes. If frozen and permanent sections are nondiagnostic, tissue that was retained in glutaraldehyde may be submitted for additional paraffin sections.

In touch, smear, and squash preparations, the presence of cells with long delicate processes is suggestive of a primary CNS cell type. The identification of macrophages is important since a macrophage-rich lesion is more likely a subacute infarct or demyelination, rather than a neoplasm.

If an infectious etiology is suspected, the neurosurgeon should be alerted to submit a fresh sample to microbiology to be processed for bacterial, fungal, and/or viral cultures.

If a lymphoproliferative disorder is suspected and sufficient tissue is available, a portion of fresh tissue should be set aside for appropriate workup.

**G. Margins**

With the exception of malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumors, resection margins provide no prognostic information and generally are not required for most CNS neoplasms.

**H. Ancillary Studies**

Immunohistochemical and molecular genetic studies are often performed to assist with diagnosis, prognosis, or to predict therapeutic response. For information regarding biomarker testing for gliomas and embryonal tumors, the CAP CNS Biomarker Template should be referenced.<sup>6</sup>

## I. Relevant History

### Patient Age

Patient age may be important for predicting tumor behavior and is predictive of survival in many malignant CNS neoplasms. For diffusely infiltrating astrocytomas, age and histologic grade are the two strong predictors of patient outcome, with age greater than 50 years and high-grade histology serving as negative indicators.<sup>7-10</sup>

### Duration of Symptoms

A long clinical history of neurological symptoms prior to the diagnosis of a CNS tumor is suggestive of a slowly growing neoplasm. Alternatively, a sudden onset of clinical symptoms or a rapidly progressive neurological deficit may indicate a high-grade tumor, hemorrhage, infarct, or active demyelinating disease.

### Previous Diagnoses or CNS Biopsies

Knowledge of the presence or absence of previous intracranial or extracranial disease (eg, immunosuppression, previous CNS or other primary neoplasm) is essential for specimen interpretation. If a previous tumor is included in the differential diagnosis, it is useful to have microscopic slides of the lesion available for review and comparison.

### Family History of Cancer or Primary CNS Tumors

Several genetic conditions/syndromes are associated with an increased predisposition to the development of specific forms of CNS neoplasms (eg, neurofibromatosis types 1 and 2, Turcot/Lynch, tuberous sclerosis, von Hippel-Lindau, Cowden, Li-Fraumeni, and Gorlin syndromes).

## J. Neuroimaging Findings

Knowledge of neuroimaging features is extremely helpful in specimen interpretation.<sup>11</sup> A differential diagnosis may be generated based on patient age, tumor location, and neuroimaging features. Neuroimaging also can be helpful in providing correlation with or highlighting discrepancy with pathologic diagnosis (eg, contrast enhancement with hypocellularity). A close collaboration with the neuroradiologist and neurosurgeon is essential.

## K. Preoperative Treatment and Treatment Effect

Knowledge of preoperative treatment, including radiation therapy, chemotherapy, corticosteroid therapy, embolization, and other therapy, is helpful for specimen interpretation.<sup>7-9</sup> In particular, prior radiation therapy or radiosurgery may alter the interpretation of specimens in which there are increased cellular atypia, decreased proliferative activity, or large areas of radiation-induced change (eg, coagulative [nonpalisading] necrosis, vascular hyalinization, and gliosis). The addition of chemotherapy to radiation, either concurrently or in the adjuvant setting, may exacerbate the side effects of radiation. For patients with malignant gliomas, the presence and degree of radiation necrosis appear to be of prognostic significance. Tumors that show evidence of radiation necrosis are associated with a longer survival, and the degree of necrosis appears to be prognostically significant.<sup>12</sup> Corticosteroid treatment can alter the pathologic features of some CNS diseases. In particular, the treatment of primary CNS lymphoma with corticosteroids can be associated with widespread tumor necrosis or infiltration by macrophages, which may limit or misguide interpretation. Embolization of certain tumor types, especially meningiomas, may introduce histologic changes in the neoplasm.

## L. Mesenchymal Tumors

Mesenchymal tumors vary widely in grade, from benign tumors (WHO grade I) to highly malignant sarcomas (WHO grade III to IV). The classification and grading of these lesions are performed corresponding to the WHO monograph, *Tumours of Soft Tissue and Bone*.<sup>13</sup> The CAP cancer protocols for bone<sup>1</sup> and soft tissue<sup>4</sup> should be used for those tumors that are primary to bone and soft tissue, respectively.

## References

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