Protocol for the Examination of Specimens From Patients With Carcinoma of the Vulva

Protocol applies to all invasive carcinomas of the vulva.

Based on AJCC/UICC TNM, 7th edition, and FIGO 2008 Annual Report
Protocol web posting date: November 2011

Procedures
- Excisional Biopsy
- Vulvectomy (With or Without Removal of Other Organs and Tissues)

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CAP Vulva Protocol Revision History

Version Code
The definition of the version code can be found at www.cap.org/cancerprotocols.

Version: Vulva 3.1.0.1

Summary of Changes
The following changes have been made since the February 2011 release.

Excisional Biopsy/Resection

Lymph Nodes
“Laterality” was changed to “Laterality of involved lymph nodes.”
Surgical Pathology Cancer Case Summary

Protocol web posting date: November 2011

VULVA: Excisional Biopsy, Resection

Select a single response unless otherwise indicated.

**Specimen (select all that apply) (Note A)**

- _Vulva_
- _Other (specify): ___________________________
- _Not specified_

**Procedure**

- _Local excision_
- _Wide excision_
- _Partial vulvectomy_
- _Total vulvectomy_
- _Radical vulvectomy_
- _Other (specify): ___________________________
- _Not specified_

**Lymph Node Sampling (select all that apply)**

- _Not applicable_
- _Sentinel lymph node biopsy_
- _Inguinal-femoral nodes_
- _Pelvic nodes_
- _Other (specify): ___________________________

**Specimen Size**

Greatest dimension: ___ cm

+ Additional dimensions: ___ x ___ cm

- _Cannot be determined (see Comment)_

**Tumor Site (select all that apply)**

- _Right vulva_
  - _Labiomajus_
  - _Labium minus_
- _Left vulva_
  - _Labiomajus_
  - _Labium minus_
- _Clitoris_
- _Other (specify): ___________________________
- _Not specified_

**Tumor Size (Note B)**

Greatest dimension: ___ cm

+ Additional dimensions: ___ x ___ cm

- _Cannot be determined (see Comment)_
Tumor Focality
___ Unifocal
___ Multifocal
___ Cannot be determined (see Comment)
___ Not specified

Histologic Type (select all that apply) (Notes C and D)
___ Squamous cell carcinoma
   + ___ Keratinizing
   + ___ Nonkeratinizing
   + ___ Basaloid
   + ___ Warty
   + ___ Verrucous
   + ___ Other (specify): ______________________________
___ Glandular tumors
   + ___ Paget disease
   + ___ Bartholin gland tumors
     + ___ Adenocarcinoma
     + ___ Squamous cell carcinoma
     + ___ Adenoid cystic carcinoma
     + ___ Adenosquamous carcinoma
     + ___ Transitional cell carcinoma
     + ___ Small cell carcinoma
     + ___ Adenocarcinoma of mammary gland type
     + ___ Adenocarcinoma of Skene gland origin
     + ___ Malignant sweat gland tumors
___ Other (specify): ______________________________
___ Carcinoma, type cannot be determined (see Comment)

Histologic Grade
___ Not applicable
___ GX: Cannot be assessed
___ G1: Well differentiated
___ G2: Moderately differentiated
___ G3: Poorly differentiated
___ G4: Undifferentiated
___ Other (specify): ______________________________

Microscopic Tumor Extension (Note E)
Depth of invasion: ___ mm
___ Cannot be determined (see Comment)
___ Other (specify): ______________________________

+ Tumor Border (Note F)
+ ___ Pushing
+ ___ Infiltrating
Margins (select all that apply)
___ Cannot be determined (see Comment)
___ Uninvolved by invasive carcinoma
   Distance of invasive carcinoma from closest margin: ___ mm
   Specify margin, if possible: ______________________
___ Carcinoma in situ not identified at margin
___ Carcinoma in situ present at margin
___ Involved by invasive carcinoma
   Specify margin(s): ____________________________

Lymph-Vascular Invasion (Note G)
___ Not identified
___ Present
___ Cannot be determined (see Comment)

Lymph Nodes (Note H)
___ No nodes submitted or found

Number of Lymph Nodes Examined
Specify: ____
___ Number cannot be determined (explain): ______________________

Number of Lymph Nodes With Metastasis
Specify: ____
___ Number cannot be determined (explain): ______________________
   Number of lymph nodes with metastasis(es) <5 mm: ___
   Number of lymph nodes with metastasis(es) ≥5 mm: ___

Extranodal extension:
___ Present
___ Not identified
___ Cannot be determined (see Comment)

Fixed or ulcerated femoral-inguinal lymph nodes:
___ Present
___ Not identified
___ Cannot be determined (see Comment)

Laterality of involved lymph nodes:
___ Unilateral
___ Bilateral

Pathologic Staging (pTNM [FIGO]) (Note I)

TNM Descriptors (required only if applicable) (select all that apply)
___ m (multiple primary tumors)
___ r (recurrent)
___ y (posttreatment)
**Primary Tumor (pT)**
- **pTX**: Primary tumor cannot be assessed
- **pT0**: No evidence of primary tumor
- **pTis**: Carcinoma in situ (preinvasive carcinoma)
- **pT1a [FIGO IA]**: Lesions 2 cm or less in size, confined to the vulva or perineum, and with stromal invasion 1.0 mm or less
- **pT1b [FIGO IB]**: Lesions more than 2 cm in size or any size with stromal invasion more than 1.0 mm, confined to the vulva or perineum
- **pT2 [FIGO II]**: Tumor of any size with extension to adjacent perineal structures (lower/distal 1/3 urethra, lower/distal 1/3 vagina, anal involvement)
- **pT3 [FIGO IVA]**: Tumor of any size with extension to any of the following: upper/proximal 2/3 of urethra, upper/proximal 2/3 vagina, bladder mucosa, rectal mucosa, or fixed to pelvic bone

**Regional Lymph Nodes (pN)** (select all that apply)
- **pNX**: Regional lymph nodes cannot be assessed
- **pN0**: No regional lymph node metastasis
- **pN1**: One or two regional lymph nodes with the following features
  - **pN1a [FIGO IIIA]**: One or two lymph node metastasis each 5 mm or less
  - **pN1b [FIGO IIIA]**: One lymph node metastasis 5 mm or greater
- **pN2 [FIGO IIIB]**: Regional lymph node metastasis with the following features
  - **pN2a [FIGO IIIB]**: Three or more lymph node metastases each less than 5 mm
  - **pN2b [FIGO IIIB]**: Two or more lymph node metastases 5 mm or greater
  - **pN2c [FIGO IIIC]**: Lymph node metastasis with extracapsular spread
- **pN3 [FIGO IVA]**: Fixed or ulcerated regional lymph node metastasis

**Distant Metastasis (pM)**
- **M0**: No distant metastasis
- **pM1 [FIGO IVB]**: Distant metastasis (including pelvic lymph node metastasis)
  - Specify site(s), if known: __________________________

**Additional Pathologic Findings** (select all that apply) *(Note I)*
- ___ None identified
- ___ Dysplasia
- ___ Condyloma accuminatum
- ___ Vulvar intraepithelial neoplasia (VIN) 3 (severe dysplasia/carcinoma in situ)
- ___ Other (specify): __________________________

**Comment(s)**

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*Data elements preceded by this symbol are not required. However, these elements may be clinically important but are not yet validated or regularly used in patient management.*
Explanatory Notes

A. Suggestions for Sampling of Tissue Removed for Diagnosis or Treatment of Vulvar Carcinoma

Tumor
Sections taken will vary with procedure, as designated by surgeon. Sections to include the following should be taken (if appropriate):
- Tumor, representative sections, including site of deepest invasion and interface of tumor with adjacent epithelium
- Resection margins
- Sections of abnormal epithelium or other tissue remote from tumor
- Sections of areas(s) marked by surgeon
- Sections of prior biopsy or resection site of tumor if no tumor present grossly

Lymph Nodes
The femoral and inguinal lymph nodes are the sites of regional spread. When inguinal-femoral lymphadenectomy is performed, 6 or more lymph nodes will normally be included. One or more sections of all lymph nodes identified should be taken, depending on presence or absence of gross tumor as well as size of lymph node. In addition, sections to confirm presence or absence of extranodal extension should be taken.

Other Organs and Tissues
Other organs and tissues may be submitted with the vulva specimen. Sections to include the following should be taken (if appropriate):
- Sections to demonstrate presence or absence of tumor
- Sections to demonstrate its relation, if present, to vulvar tumor (contiguous or metastatic
- Sections of other lesions, if present
- Resection margins

If frozen section analysis was performed, those tissue fragment(s) should be submitted.

B. Thickness of Tumor
The thickness of a squamous cell carcinoma is measured in millimeters from the surface of the tumor or, if there is surface keratinization, from the bottom of the granular layer to the deepest point of invasion.

C. Etiology/Pathogenesis
Two pathways have been elucidated in the pathogenesis of invasive vulvar carcinoma. The first pathway involves classic vulvar intraepithelial neoplasia (VIN), which is associated with high-grade human papillomavirus (HPV) subtypes (16 >18), and is histologically similar to dysplasia seen in the cervix. It tends to be multifocal and more common in younger women, with a relatively low risk of progression into an invasive squamous cell carcinoma. It is diffusely positive with p16 (reflecting HPV association) and is negative with p53. The associated invasive component is basaloid or warty in morphology. The second pathway is referred to as differentiated VIN (VIN simplex). VIN simplex is not associated with HPV, but instead with vulvar dystrophy such as that seen in the context of lichen sclerosus or squamous hyperplasia. The morphologic features are more subtle, with atypia noted in the parabasal cells. The associated invasive component is keratinizing and can be associated with p53 mutations. This subtype usually occurs in older women. Most recently, cutaneous HPV subtypes (5,8) were found to be associated with this form. Of note, overlap does exist between the two pathways, with some tumors exhibiting morphologic and/or clinical features of each.
Keratinizing Squamous Carcinoma | Basaloid Squamous Carcinoma
--- | ---
**Prevalence** | More common (approximately 80%) | Less common (approximately 20%)
**Age** | Older females | Younger females
**Distribution** | Usually unifocal, may be multifocal | Often multifocal
**Association with multifocal lower genital tract neoplasia** | Rare | Common
**Morphology** | Keratinizing | Warty
**Associated vulvar intraepithelial neoplasia (VIN)** | Uncommon: differentiated type | Common: classic type
**Association with HPV** | Yes, beta (cutaneous)\(^8\) 5,8 | Yes, alpha 16>18
**Association with vulvar dystrophy** | Common | Rare
**Immunohistochemistry** | p53: Some cases positive  p16: Negative or focally positive at stromal interface | p53: Negative  p16: Positive

Adapted from McCluggage.\(^5\)

D. Histologic Type

The following is an abbreviated, slightly modified version of the World Health Organization (WHO) classification of histologic types of malignant and premalignant vulvar epithelial tumors\(^3,9\):  

**WHO Classification of Vulvar Epithelial Tumors and Related Lesions**

**Squamous Lesions**
- Intraepithelial neoplasia (VIN)
  - Mild dysplasia (VIN 1)
  - Moderate dysplasia (VIN 2)
  - Severe dysplasia (VIN 3)
  - Carcinoma in situ (VIN 3)
- Squamous cell carcinoma
  - Keratinizing
  - Nonkeratinizing
  - Basaloid
  - Warty
  - Verrucous
  - Keratoacanthoma-like
  - Variant with tumor giant cells
  - Others
- Basal cell carcinoma

**Glandular Lesions**
- Paget disease
- Bartholin gland tumors
  - Adenocarcinoma
Squamous cell carcinoma
Adenoid cystic carcinoma
Adenosquamous carcinoma
Transitional cell carcinoma
Small cell carcinoma
Adenocarcinoma of mammary gland type
Adenocarcinoma of Skene gland origin
Malignant sweat gland tumors
Adenocarcinomas of other types

E. Depth of Invasion
The depth of invasion of squamous cell carcinoma is defined as the measurement in millimeters from the epithelial-stromal junction of the adjacent most superficial dermal papilla to the deepest point of invasion.\(^2\)\(^-\)\(^4\)

F. Tumor Growth Pattern
Vulvar squamous cell carcinomas can generally be separated into those tumors that have a predominately infiltrating (fingertiplike) pattern and those that invade with a broad, pushing front ( verrucous carcinoma). In some studies, infiltrating invasion is associated with a higher frequency of regional lymph node metastasis and should be noted in the report.\(^10\)

G. Lymphatic/Blood Vessel Invasion
Vascular space invasion by squamous cell carcinoma has been associated with a poorer prognosis, including a risk factor for regional lymph node metastasis, and should be noted in the report.\(^11\)\(^-\)\(^13\)

H. Extranodal Extension/Nodal Replacement
Both extranodal extension as well as the size of lymph node metastasis have been shown to reflect prognosis and should be noted in the report.\(^2\),\(^12\),\(^14\),\(^15\)

I. TNM and International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) Stage Groupings
The TNM staging system of the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) and the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) for carcinoma of the vulva is recommended and is shown below.\(^2\),\(^16\)

Comparison with FIGO staging is also shown.\(^17\),\(^18\)

According to AJCC/UICC convention, the designation “T” refers to a primary tumor that has not been previously treated. The symbol “p” refers to the pathologic classification of the TNM, as opposed to the clinical classification, and is based on gross and microscopic examination. pT entails a resection of the primary tumor or biopsy adequate to evaluate the highest pT category, pN entails removal of nodes adequate to validate lymph node metastasis, and pM implies microscopic examination of distant lesions. Clinical classification (cTNM) is usually carried out by the referring physician before treatment during initial evaluation of the patient or when pathologic classification is not possible.

Pathologic staging is usually performed after surgical resection of the primary tumor. Pathologic staging depends on pathologic documentation of the anatomic extent of disease, whether or not the primary tumor has been completely removed. If a biopsied tumor is not resected for any reason (eg, when technically infeasible) and if the highest T and N categories or the M1 category of the tumor can be confirmed microscopically, the criteria for pathologic classification and staging have been satisfied without total removal of the primary cancer.
TNM and FIGO Staging Systems for Vulvar Carcinoma

Primary Tumor (T)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TNM</th>
<th>FIGO</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Stages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TX</td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary tumor cannot be assessed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T0</td>
<td></td>
<td>No evidence of primary tumor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Carcinoma in situ (preinvasive carcinoma)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1a</td>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Lesions 2 cm or less in size, confined to the vulva or perineum and with stromal invasion 1.0 mm or less</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1b</td>
<td>IB</td>
<td>Lesions more than 2 cm in size or any size with stromal invasion more than 1.0 mm, confined to the vulva or perineum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Tumor of any size with extension to adjacent perineal structures (lower/distal 1/3 urethra, lower/distal 1/3 vagina, anal involvement)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>IVA</td>
<td>Tumor of any size with extension to any of the following: upper/proximal 2/3 of urethra, upper/proximal 2/3 vagina, bladder mucosa, rectal mucosa, or fixed to pelvic bone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The depth of invasion is defined as the measurement of the tumor from the epithelial-stromal junction of the adjacent most superficial dermal papilla to the deepest point of invasion.

Regional Lymph Nodes (N)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NX</th>
<th>Regional lymph nodes cannot be assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N0</td>
<td>No regional lymph node metastasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N1</td>
<td>One or two regional lymph nodes with the following features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N1a</td>
<td>IIIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N1b</td>
<td>IIIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2</td>
<td>IIIB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2a</td>
<td>IIIB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2b</td>
<td>IIIB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2c</td>
<td>IIIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3</td>
<td>IVA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An effort should be made to describe the site and laterality of lymph node metastases.

Distant Metastasis (M)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M0</th>
<th>No distant metastasis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>IVB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anatomic Stage/Prognostic Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 0</th>
<th>Tis</th>
<th>N0</th>
<th>M0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage I</td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>N0</td>
<td>M0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage IA</td>
<td>T1a</td>
<td>N0</td>
<td>M0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage IB</td>
<td>T1b</td>
<td>N0</td>
<td>M0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage II</td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>N0</td>
<td>M0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage IIIA</td>
<td>T1, T2</td>
<td>N1a, N1b</td>
<td>M0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage IIIB</td>
<td>T1, T2</td>
<td>N2a, N2b</td>
<td>M0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage IIIC</td>
<td>T1, T2</td>
<td>N2c</td>
<td>M0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage IVA</td>
<td>T1, T2</td>
<td>N3</td>
<td>M0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage IVB</td>
<td>T3</td>
<td>Any N</td>
<td>M0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage IVB</td>
<td>Any T</td>
<td>Any N</td>
<td>M1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TNM Descriptors
For identification of special cases of TNM or pTNM classifications, the “m” suffix and “y,” “r,” and “a” prefixes are used. Although they do not affect the stage grouping, they indicate cases needing separate analysis.

The “m” suffix indicates the presence of multiple primary tumors in a single site and is recorded in parentheses: pT(m)NM.

The “y” prefix indicates those cases in which classification is performed during or after initial multimodality therapy. The cTNM or pTNM category is identified by a “y” prefix. The ycTNM or ypTNM categorizes the extent of tumor actually present at the time of that examination. The “y” categorization is not an estimate of tumor before multimodality therapy.

The “r” prefix indicates a recurrent tumor when staged after a disease-free interval and is identified by the “r” prefix: rTNM.

The “a” prefix designates the stage determined at autopsy: aTNM.

Additional Descriptors
Residual Tumor (R)
The absence or presence of residual tumor after treatment. In some cases treated with surgery and/or neoadjuvant therapy there will be residual tumor at the primary site after treatment because of incomplete resection or local and regional disease that extends beyond the limit of ability of resection.

RX Presence of residual tumor cannot be assessed
R0 No residual tumor
R1 Microscopic residual tumor
R2 Macroscopic residual tumor

For the surgeon, the R classification may be useful to indicate the known or assumed status of the completeness of a surgical excision. For the pathologist, the R classification is relevant to the status of the margins of a surgical resection specimen. That is, tumor involving the resection margin on pathologic examination may be assumed to correspond to residual tumor in the patient and may be classified as macroscopic or microscopic according to the findings at the specimen margin(s).

Lymph-Vascular Invasion
Lymph-vascular invasion (LVI) indicates whether microscopic lymph-vascular invasion is identified. LVI includes lymphatic invasion, vascular invasion, or lymph-vascular invasion. According to AJCC/UICC convention, LVI does not affect the T category indicating local extent of tumor unless specifically included in the definition of a T category.

Sentinel Lymph Nodes
The sentinel lymph node is the first node to receive drainage from a primary tumor. There may be more than one sentinel node for some tumors. If a sentinel node contains metastatic tumor, it indicates that other more distant nodes may also contain metastatic disease. If sentinel nodes are negative, other regional nodes are less likely to contain metastasis.\(^1,13\)
References

8. Glazyrin A, Rohwedder A, Carlson, JA. Beta-human papillomaviruses (HPV) are common in vulvar squamous cell carcinomas and surrounding skin. Mod Pathol. 2009;22[suppl 1]:103A. Poster presentation at 98th annual meeting, USCAP.