4. CLASSIFICATION AND STAGING SYSTEMS

4.1 Classification

The objective of a tumour classification system is to combine patients with a similar clinical outcome. This allows for discussion about prognosis with patients, the design of clinical trials on relatively homogeneous populations, the comparison of clinical and pathological data obtained from different hospitals across the world, and the development of recommendations for the treatment of these patient populations. Throughout these Guidelines the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) 8th edition (2017), the Tumour, Node, Metastasis (TNM) classification for staging of PCa (Table 4.1) [101] and the EAU risk group classification are used [102]. The latter classification is based on the grouping of patients with a similar risk of biochemical recurrence (BCR) after radical prostatectomy (RP) or external beam radiotherapy (EBRT). Changes in the diagnostic pathway, such as imaging (e.g., MRI, Prostate-Specific Membrane Antigen [PSMA] Positron Emission Tomography Computed Tomography [PET/CT] scan) and biopsy (e.g., increasing number of systematic biopsy cores, targeted biopsy) may cause stage and grade shift altering the risk profile of any specific classification systems [103].

Although the 2017 American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) staging 8th edition specifically states that clinical staging should be based on digital rectal examination (DRE) only, such an explicit comment is not made by the UICC. Since clinical stage as assessed by DRE only, is included in the EAU (D'Amico) risk group classification, cT-stage should be based on DRE findings and not on imaging. Additional staging information based on imaging should be reported separately. A non-palpable PCa with bilateral positive biopsies and extra-prostatic extension (EPE) on MRI would therefore be categorised as cT1c with a separate report of MRI findings.

Table 4.1: Clinical Tumour Node Metastasis (TNM) classification of PCa [101]

T - Primary Tumour (stage based on digital rectal examination only)	
TX	Primary tumour cannot be assessed
T0	No evidence of primary tumour
T1	Clinically inapparent tumour that is **not palpable**
T1a	Tumour incidental histological finding in 5% or less of tissue resected
T1b	Tumour incidental histological finding in more than 5% of tissue resected
T1c	Tumour identified by needle biopsy (e.g. because of elevated prostate-specific antigen [PSA])
T2	Tumour that is palpable and confined within the prostate
T2a	Tumour involves one half of one lobe or less
T2b	Tumour involves more than half of one lobe, but not both lobes
T2c	Tumour involves both lobes
T3	Tumour extends **palpably** through the prostatic capsule
T3a	Extracapsular extension (unilateral or bilateral)
T3b	Tumour invades seminal vesicle(s)
T4	Tumour is fixed or invades adjacent structures other than seminal vesicles: external sphincter, rectum, levator muscles, and/or pelvic wall
N - Regional (pelvic) Lymph Nodes[1]	
NX	Regional lymph nodes cannot be assessed
N0	No regional lymph node metastasis
N1	Regional lymph node metastasis
M - Distant Metastasis[2]	
M0	No distant metastasis
M1	Distant metastasis
M1a	Non-regional lymph node(s)
M1b	Bone(s)
M1c	Other site(s)

[1] *Nodal metastasis no larger than 0.2 cm can be designated pNmi.*

[2] *When more than one site of metastasis is present, the most advanced category is used. (p)M1c is the most advanced category.*