

Launch of structured reporting ensures patients receive world's best practice in cancer care

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) has launched new structured reporting guidelines which will bring huge benefits to patients and specialists in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

Associate Professor David Ellis, an Anatomical Pathologist and Chair of the Project Group for the National Structured Pathology Reporting for Cancer Project, says the new reporting templates will enhance communication of critical diagnostic information between pathologists and clinicians, ensuring patients are treated according to world's best practice.

"The new structured reporting format will give cancer specialists a complete, unambiguous and detailed document upon which to base their treatment," says Associate Professor Ellis.

"For patients, the standard reporting format enables treating clinicians to rapidly access and decipher complex and detailed pathological information about cancer type, stage and prognostic biomarkers. This in turn ensures the patient can receive optimised treatment tailored to their particular cancer.

"This new structured reporting format will improve the accuracy and completeness of communication in a standardised template that is easily assimilated and retained by clinicians - it makes sure patients are given the best possible care.

"We are currently collaborating with pathology colleagues in America, Canada and the UK in a process which we are referring to as "Diagnostic Oncology". Our ultimate goal is that the pathology report for every cancer patient in the English-speaking world should be standardised to the same high level of detailed information and in the same clear format, thus enhancing epidemiological research and delivering best practice in patient care on a global level," says Associate Professor Ellis.

President of the RCPA, Associate Professor Paul McKenzie says that this is an important step towards ensuring patients all over Australia have the highest quality of cancer pathology reporting.

"In standardising our report format and content with the US, Canada and UK, we are ensuring that overseas cancer research findings can be directly applicable locally," says Associate Professor McKenzie.

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