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Background

Descriptive analyses were conducted to determine how the Michigan Basic Cancer Pathology Lexicon Project has impacted the surgical pathology reporting practices among Michigan laboratories. Assessment of the current utilization of synoptic template checklists within Michigan laboratories was also included.

Data used in this analysis were collected through laboratory facility audits conducted by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Cancer Surveillance Program. These laboratory audits resulted in the collection of de-identified pathology reports for breast, prostate, and colorectal cancers from 21 different Michigan pathology laboratories for the years of 2003 (pre-Lexicon development) and 2005 (post-Lexicon development). Collecting pathology reports from these two years allowed us to compare pathology reporting practices from before and after the initiation of the MCC Basic Lexicon Project.

A telephone survey was also conducted by the MDCH Cancer Control Program in 2006. Over the course of this survey 138 pathology laboratories from throughout the state of Michigan were contacted. Pathologists from each facility were asked several questions pertaining to the current use of synoptic template checklists within their facility.

Introduction

The Michigan Basic Cancer Pathology Lexicon Project was first launched in 2003. The purpose of this project was to educate health care professionals regarding the methodology and benefits of incorporating a standardized basic lexicon for improving cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Since the initial implementation of the Basic Lexicon Project several efforts have been made into evaluating the dissemination and proper utilization of the basic cancer pathology lexicons (synoptic template checklists) for cancers of the breast, prostate, and colon/rectum.

Methods

To determine whether the initiation of the Basic Lexicon Project has lead to more detailed reporting by Michigan pathology laboratories both the 2003 and 2005 de-identified pathology reports for breast, prostate and colorectal cancer from each facility were compared with the MCC standardized lexicon template for each particular cancer site. This analysis focused on the change in the number of elements that were included in each facility's synoptic template checklists from 2003 to 2005.

The telephone survey was used to determine the penetrance or prevalence of use of synoptic template checklists for cancer surgical pathology reporting in Michigan laboratories. The descriptive data collected through this survey focused on determining the number of Michigan pathology facilities that are currently using synoptic template checklists, as well as the types of checklists these facilities are currently using. For those facilities that reported not using any template checklist, they were informed of the availability of the MCC standardized synoptic templates and were provided appropriate information.

Results

The Michigan Cancer Surveillance Program (MCSP 05)

Figure 1.

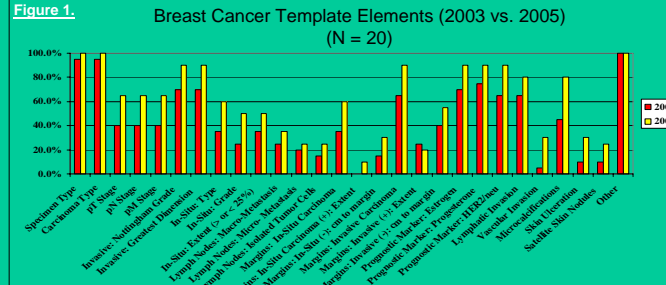


Figure 2.

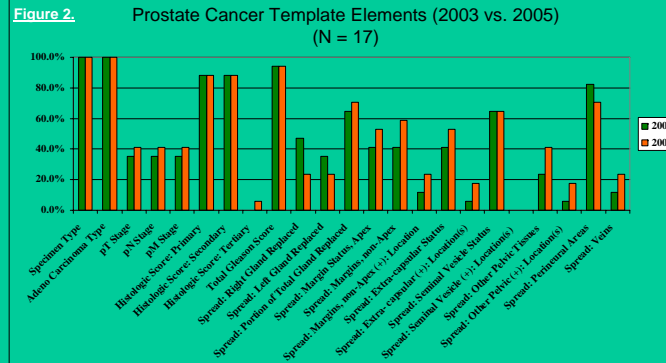
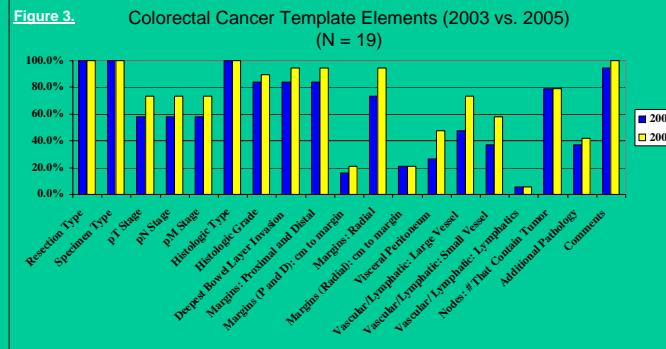


Figure 3.



The Michigan Pathology Laboratories Telephone Survey (MPL06)

Figure 4.

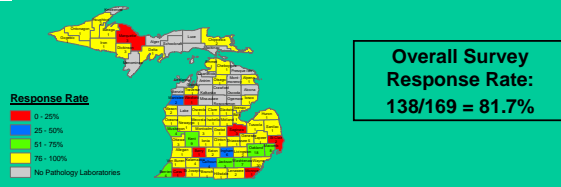


Figure 5.

Pathology Laboratories Telephone Survey: Use of Pathology Template Checklists (N = 138)

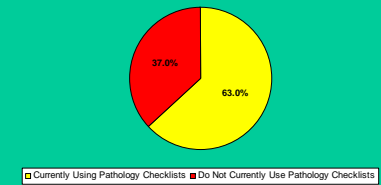


Figure 6.

Pathology Laboratories Telephone Survey: Type of Pathology Checklist Used (N = 87)

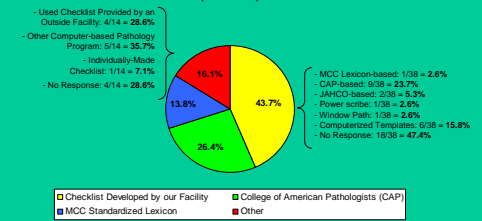
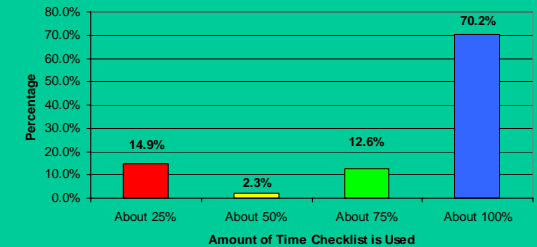


Figure 7.

Pathology Laboratories Telephone Survey: Percentage of Time Checklist is Used (N = 87)



Key Findings

Since the initiation of the Basic Lexicon Project many Michigan pathology laboratories have made great improvements in the format and content of their synoptic template checklists for breast, prostate, and colorectal cancer [Figure 1-3].

138 pathology facilities (response rate = 81.7%) were contacted through the telephone survey with 87 (63.0%) of these facilities indicating that they currently use some form of synoptic template [Figure 4-5].

Out of the facilities that currently use synoptic templates a variety of template types are used [Figure 6]. The majority of these facilities (70.2%) use their pathology templates nearly 100% of the time [Figure 7].

Over the years, the implementation of the Basic Lexicon Project has contributed significantly to improving the quality of surgical pathology reporting practices among Michigan laboratories. With these improvements pathology template checklists are now considered better sources of information for providers when making prognostic and treatment decisions.