

Decision-making guidelines

Aggressive Treatment Justified:

- 1) Cure is possible
- 2) Realistic chance of worthwhile prolongation of life
- 3) Patient chooses a clinical trial with informed consent

Aggressive Treatment Inappropriate:

- 1) Aggressive treatment of asymptomatic metastasis
- 2) Use of 2 or more modalities when 1 would be adequate
- 3) Prolonged duration of a palliative treatment in relation to the patient's life expectancy
- 4) Severe morbidity from treatment in relation to the hoped for degree of palliation

Criteria for Doing Diagnostic Studies:

- 1) Results will potentially alter the patient's management
- 2) Test will help determine the etiology of symptoms before treatment is initiated and its invasiveness does not cause more discomfort than is warranted by the information to be gained
- 3) Benefits of the results outweigh the physical, emotional, and financial costs of obtaining them
- 4) Patient life expectancy is longer than just a few days

Summary:

- 1) Potential benefits outweigh the potential risks or burden to the patient
- 2) Goal is to maintain QOL rather than extend life
- 3) Therapy and/or test meet the approval of the patient, depending on the patient's values, goals, and beliefs
- 4) Outcome is related to the comfort of the patient rather than changing the course of the disease.