

# Person with cancer—morphology of cancer, code (ICD-O-3) NNNN/N

Exported from METEOR (AIHW's Metadata Online Registry)

© Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024

This product, excluding the AIHW logo, Commonwealth Coat of Arms and any material owned by a third party or protected by a trademark, has been released under a Creative Commons BY 4.0 (CC BY 4.0) licence. Excluded material owned by third parties may include, for example, design and layout, images obtained under licence from third parties and signatures. We have made all reasonable efforts to identify and label material owned by third parties.

You may distribute, remix and build on this website's material but must attribute the AIHW as the copyright holder, in line with our attribution policy. The full terms and conditions of this licence are available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Enquiries relating to copyright should be addressed to [info@aihw.gov.au](mailto:info@aihw.gov.au).

Enquiries or comments on the METEOR metadata or download should be directed to the METEOR team at [meteor@aihw.gov.au](mailto:meteor@aihw.gov.au).

# Person with cancer—morphology of cancer, code (ICD-O-3) NNNN/N

## Identifying and definitional attributes

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Metadata item type:</b>  | Data Element                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Short name:</b>          | Morphology of cancer                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>METEOR identifier:</b>   | 399491                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Registration status:</b> | <a href="#">Health!</a> , Standard 07/12/2011                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Definition:</b>          | The histological classification of the cancer tissue (histopathological type) in a person with cancer, and a description of the course of development that a tumour is likely to take: benign or malignant (behaviour), as represented by a code. |

## Data element concept attributes

### Identifying and definitional attributes

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Data element concept:</b> | <a href="#">Person with cancer—morphology of cancer</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>METEOR identifier:</b>    | 269647                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Registration status:</b>  | <a href="#">Health!</a> , Standard 01/03/2005                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Definition:</b>           | The morphology of a cancer refers to the histological classification of the cancer tissue (histopathological type) and a description of the course of development that a tumour is likely to take: benign or malignant (behaviour). The designation is based on a microscopic diagnosis of morphology by the pathologist (Esteban, Whelan, Laudico & Parkin 1995). |
| <b>Object class:</b>         | <a href="#">Person with cancer</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Property:</b>             | <a href="#">Morphology of cancer</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## Value domain attributes

### Identifying and definitional attributes

|                             |                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Value domain:</b>        | <a href="#">Morphology of cancer code (ICD-O-3) NNNN/N</a>                                  |
| <b>METEOR identifier:</b>   | 399496                                                                                      |
| <b>Registration status:</b> | <a href="#">Health!</a> , Standard 07/12/2011                                               |
| <b>Definition:</b>          | The ICD-O (3rd edition) code set representing the histology and behaviour of cancer tissue. |

## Representational attributes

|                                  |                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Classification scheme:</b>    | <a href="#">International Classification of Diseases for Oncology 3rd edition</a> |
| <b>Representation class:</b>     | Code                                                                              |
| <b>Data type:</b>                | Number                                                                            |
| <b>Format:</b>                   | NNNN/N                                                                            |
| <b>Maximum character length:</b> | 5                                                                                 |

## Collection and usage attributes

**Guide for use:** ICD-O morphology describes histology and behaviour as separate variables, recognising that there are a large number of possible combinations.

In ICD-O, morphology is a 4-digit number ranging from 8000 to 9989, and behaviour is a single digit which can be 0, 1, 2, 3, 6 or 9.

When the morphology is unknown, record 8000 and the appropriate behaviour code. For example, a tumour of unknown morphology with a behaviour code of "3" for a malignant primary site tumour would be recorded as 8000/3.

## Source and reference attributes

**Origin:** International Classification of Diseases for Oncology, Third Edition (ICD-O-3)

## Data element attributes

## Collection and usage attributes

**Guide for use:** Tumour morphology refers to the type of cell (histology) that has become neoplastic and its biologic activity (behaviour).

Record the tumour morphology for patients who have been diagnosed with cancer.

Record the tumour morphology relating to the initial diagnosis and not for recurrent disease.

Record morphology codes in accordance with ICD-O-3 coding standards. Use the 5th-digit to record behaviour. Refer to the coding guidelines for morphology in ICD-O-3, pp 27-34.

If the morphology differs on multiple pathology reports for the same tumour, use the value from the most representative tumour specimen examined. For example, if the tumour is described as ductal on core biopsy but undifferentiated carcinoma on the excision specimen, the morphology would be coded as undifferentiated carcinoma (a lower code) which has a less favourable diagnosis.

**Collection methods:** This information should be obtained from the patient's pathology reports or, in the case of cancer registries, from the notification reports.

**Comments:** The information is collected so that tumours can be classified into clinically relevant groups based on their primary site and morphology. This provides a basis for staging and the determination of treatment options. The morphology of the cancer also affects the course of the disease and prognosis.

## Source and reference attributes

**Submitting organisation:** Cancer Australia

**Origin:** World Health Organization  
New South Wales Health Department  
State and Territory Cancer Registries

**Reference documents:** New South Wales Inpatient Statistics Collection Manual. 2000/2001

Esteban D, Whelan S, Laudico A, Parkin DM (Editors) 1995. World Health Organization and International Association of Cancer Registries: Manual for cancer registry personnel, IARC Technical Report No 10. Lyon: International Agency for Research on Cancer

Fritz A et al. 2000. International Classification of Diseases for Oncology (ICD-O), 3rd edition. Geneva: World Health Organization

## Relational attributes

**Related metadata references:** Supersedes [Person with cancer—morphology of cancer, code \(ICDO-3\) NNNN/N Health!](#), Superseded 07/12/2011

**Implementation in Data Set Specifications:** [Breast cancer \(cancer registries\) NBPDS](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 01/09/2012

[Cancer \(clinical\) DSS](#)  
[Health!](#), Superseded 08/05/2014

[Cancer \(clinical\) DSS](#)  
[Health!](#), Superseded 14/05/2015

[Cancer \(clinical\) NBPDS](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 14/05/2015

**Implementation in Indicators:**

**Used as Numerator**

[Australian Health Performance Framework: PI 3.1.2–Incidence of selected cancers, 2019](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 09/04/2020

[Australian Health Performance Framework: PI 3.1.2–Incidence of selected cancers, 2020](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 13/10/2021

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 02–Incidence of selected cancers, 2013](#)  
[Health!](#), Superseded 30/04/2014

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 02–Incidence of selected cancers, 2014](#)  
[Health!](#), Superseded 14/01/2015

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 02–Incidence of selected cancers, 2015](#)  
[Health!](#), Superseded 08/07/2016

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 02–Incidence of selected cancers, 2016](#)  
[Health!](#), Superseded 31/01/2017

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 02–Incidence of selected cancers, 2017](#)  
[Health!](#), Superseded 30/01/2018

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 02–Incidence of selected cancers, 2018](#)  
[Health!](#), Superseded 19/06/2019

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 02–Incidence of selected cancers, 2019](#)  
[Health!](#), Superseded 13/03/2020

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 02–Incidence of selected cancers, 2020](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 13/03/2020

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 02–Incidence of selected cancers, 2021](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 16/09/2020

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 02–Incidence of selected cancers, 2022](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 24/09/2021

**Used as Disaggregation**

[Australian Health Performance Framework: PI 2.1.5–Survival of people diagnosed with cancer, 2019](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 09/04/2020

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 24–Survival of people diagnosed with notifiable cancers, 2020](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 13/03/2020

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 24–Survival of people diagnosed with notifiable cancers, 2021](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 16/09/2020

[National Healthcare Agreement: PI 24–Survival of people diagnosed with notifiable cancers, 2022](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 24/09/2021