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Question: 1

Which classification system is commonly used for astrocytomas and glioblastomas of the brain and central nervous system?

- A. TNM
- B. Ann Arbor
- C. Summary classification
- D. WHO classification system

Answer: D

Explanation:

The WHO grading system is used to classify brain tumors and tumors of the central nervous system. This system incorporates morphology, cytogenetics and molecular genetics, and immunologic markers to determine prognosis. The TNM grading system does not apply because there are no lymph nodes in the CNS and these tumors rarely metastasize from the CNS. Under the WHO grading system:

- Grade 1 - Low proliferative potential and usually curable by surgery.
- Grade 2 - Usually infiltrating but grow slowly. May recur after surgery.
- Grade 3- Have infiltrative capabilities and grow rapidly.
- Grade 4- Active and may evolve rapidly both before and after surgery.

Question: 2

Using the standard staging system, a colon cancer that has spread to the muscle layer and the serosa, and has invaded adjacent tissue but not yet spread to the lymph nodes, would be staged as:

- A. Stage I
- B. Stage II
- C. Stage III
- D. Stage IV

Answer: B

Explanation:

Stage II. Under standard overall stage grouping, higher Roman numerals indicate increasingly advanced cancer:

- Stage 0 - In situ with no spread.
- Stage 1 - Small, localized tumors, usually treatable with surgery.
- Stage II - Tumors have spread locally to adjacent tissue and require treatment with surgery, radiation, and/or chemotherapy.
- Stage III - Tumors have spread locally and are advancing. (This stage varies according to the type of tumor). Treatment options are similar to stage II tumors.

- Stage IV - Tumors have spread to distant organs and treatment options include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, and/or clinical trials.

Question: 3

A 20-year-old patient has enlarged right cervical lymph nodes and has not responded to an initial course of antibiotics. Which test is indicated next to confirm suspected Hodgkin's disease?

- A. CT scan
- B. Fine needle aspiration (FNA)
- C. Bone marrow aspiration
- D. Excisional or incisional biopsy of the lymph nodes

Answer: D

Explanation:

An excisional or incisional biopsy, or sometimes a core biopsy, is indicated to determine if the enlarged lymph nodes are related to Hodgkin's disease. Fine needle aspiration may give a false negative and is not usually used because not enough tissue can be aspirated. CT scans from the neck to the pelvis are usually taken after a positive diagnosis to determine the spread of the disease. A PET scan may also be done to identify malignant cells. A bone marrow aspiration can be done after diagnosis to determine if the bone marrow is involved.

Question: 4

Which of the following occurs during the initiation stage of carcinogenesis?

- A. Genetic alterations caused by carcinogens are reversed through DNA repair mechanisms.
- B. Repeated exposure to carcinogens results in genetic mutations.
- C. Tumor suppressor genes are impaired.
- D. Cells exhibit increasing malignant behavior.

Answer: A

Explanation:

Carcinogenesis involves a three-stage cellular process.

- Initiation: Carcinogens cause genetic alterations in DNA, but these are usually reversed through DNA repair mechanisms, although some mutated cells may persist. However, these few cells are not usually cause for concern during the initiation stage.
- Promotion: Repeated exposure to carcinogens results in genetic mutations that persist. Suppressor genes, which prevent unnecessary cell growth, are impaired, allowing mutated cells to reproduce. Impairment of other genes prevents the death of mutated cells with damaged DNA.
- Progression: Cells exhibit increasing malignant behavior and may invade adjacent tissues.

Question: 5

Which type of biopsy, used to confirm breast cancer, requires a procedure similar to a mammogram but with the patient lying prone?

- A. Fine needle aspiration
- B. Stereotactic core biopsy
- C. Needle (wire) localization biopsy
- D. Vacuum-assisted biopsy

Answer: B

Explanation:

Stereotactic core biopsy requires a procedure similar to a mammogram, but with the patient lying prone. The breast with the lesion is compressed between paddles and a series of x-rays is taken from different perspectives in order to isolate the position of the lesion. A computer program pinpoints the position, and the physician inserts a biopsy needle directly into the lesion to aspirate a few cells. The needle position is verified by radiographic imaging.

Question: 6

When a breast tumor is classified as triple-negative, which of the following is ?

- A. The tumor should respond to drugs that target estrogen receptors.
- B. The tumor should respond to drugs that target the HER2/neu protein.
- C. The tumor should respond to drugs that target progesterone receptors.
- D. The tumor should not respond to drugs that target estrogen/progesterone receptors or the HER2/neu protein.

Answer: D

Explanation:

Those with triple-negative breast cancer lack receptors for estrogen, progesterone and HER2/neu protein, so they will not respond to drugs that target these receptors. There is no targeted therapy available for triple-negative breast cancer, so these tumors are sometimes more difficult to treat and may metastasize rapidly. However, there are numerous subtypes, and some respond better than others to therapy. Triple-negative patients are at increased risk for recurrence after mastectomy and must be monitored carefully.

Question: 7

Which of the following tests is most specific when used to confirm a diagnosis of disseminated intravascular coagulation?

- A. A CBC with differential
- B. D-dimer and FDP assay
- C. Platelet count

D. Fibrinogen level

Answer: B

Explanation:

While a whole battery of tests are usually ordered to confirm DIC, D-dimer and FDP assay are the most specific for diagnosis. The onset of DIC may be very rapid or a slower, chronic progression depending on the cause. Symptoms include bleeding from various orifices, hypotension, shock, petechiae and purpura with extensive bleeding into the tissues. Those who develop the chronic manifestation of the disease usually have fewer acute symptoms and may slowly develop ecchymosis or bleeding wounds.

Question: 8

What type of mastectomy involves the removal of the breast and lymph nodes but not the chest muscle?

- A. Radical mastectomy
- B. Simple mastectomy
- C. Partial mastectomy
- D. Modified radical mastectomy

Answer: D

Explanation:

Modified radical mastectomy: This procedure removes the breast and lymph nodes but not the chest muscles. Radical mastectomy: This procedure, which removes the breast, lymph nodes, and chest muscles, is rarely done because it has more side effects and is not more effective than other surgical approaches. Partial mastectomy: This procedure removes a section (quadrantectomy) of one breast. Simple mastectomy: Only the breast is removed, leaving the lymph nodes and muscle tissue intact.

Question: 9

A 40-year-old male who received treatment for Hodgkin's lymphoma at age 18 presents with complaints of weight loss, fatigue, persistent stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, abdominal distention, and heartburn. He should be evaluated for:

- A. Stomach cancer
- B. GERD
- C. Stomach ulcers
- D. Liver cancer

Answer: A

Explanation:

Patients who were treated for Hodgkin's lymphoma, especially before age 21, are at increased risk of developing secondary tumors (10% of patients at 20 years). The most common secondary tumors include stomach, lung, colorectal, breast, thyroid, bone, leukemia, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The symptoms that this man is experiencing are consistent with stomach cancer; however, stomach cancer is often advanced before symptoms become evident. The patient should be scheduled for an upper endoscopy and biopsy to confirm diagnosis.

Question: 10

A person who worked with asbestos for many years is most at risk for which type of cancer?

- A. Lung cancer
- B. Leukemia
- C. Mesothelioma
- D. Throat cancer

Answer: C

Explanation:

The most common cause of mesothelioma is asbestos exposure. Mesothelioma is a malignancy of the mesothelium, which lines internal organs, with the pleura affected most often. One problem with mesothelioma is that it progresses slowly and may not occur until many years (up to 50) after exposure, making screening difficult. The first symptoms relate to the tumor site, such as pleural effusion with dyspnea, cough, and pain in the chest.

Question: 11

At what age are women often advised that they no longer require routine screening for cervical cancer?

- A. 50
- B. 65
- C. 70
- D. Women should always be screened for cervical cancer.

Answer: B

Explanation:

Women are advised to have yearly screening for cervical cancer from ages 21 to 65. In many cases, women who have had normal tests are no longer advised to continue screening tests after age 65, as incidence is very low. Screening includes the Pap test, which evaluates cervical cells. The HPV test, which evaluates the presence of the human papillomavirus, a leading cause of cervical cancer, may be recommended for those 30 or older.

Question: 12

A bedridden patient with advanced liver cancer has had right abdominal pain but is now complaining that the pain has spread to his right shoulder. The most likely cause is:

- A. Improper positioning
- B. Bony metastasis
- C. A pulled muscle
- D. Referred pain

Answer: D

Explanation:

Pain in the right shoulder is a referred pain associated with liver cancer. As the cancer progresses, the liver enlarges causing pain on the right side of the abdomen initially. The enlarging liver presses on nerves beneath the diaphragm, resulting in pain that feels like it originates in the right shoulder. Liver cancer is often secondary to other cancers. However, when liver cancer is primary, the most common sites for metastasis are the lungs, portal veins, and regional lymph nodes.

Question: 13

What is the most effective preventive measure that women can take to protect them from human papilloma virus (HPV) infection?

- A. Regular use of condoms
- B. HPV vaccine
- C. Abstinence education
- D. Use of a diaphragm

Answer: B

Explanation:

The HPV vaccine is the most effective preventive measure to protect women from HPV. Condoms may provide some protection, though diaphragms do not. Abstinence education has not proven successful. There are over 40 strains of HPV that are sexually transmitted. Some types cause genital warts (condylomata). HPV infection causes changes in the mucosa, which can lead to cervical cancer or penile cancer (if transmitted to males). Over 99% of cervical cancers are caused by HPV.

Question: 14

Providing all patients with literature about the dangers of smoking, the steps to quitting, and the recommendation that all patients stop smoking, is an example of what type of preventive measure?

- A. Primary
- B. Secondary
- C. Tertiary
- D. Quaternary

Answer: A

Explanation:

Primary prevention: Includes providing patients with educational materials and information, urging safe practices (smoking cessation), and providing immunizations. Fluoridation of the water supply is also an example of primary prevention. Secondary prevention: Includes screening for those at high risk of disease (such as diabetes, high cholesterol, and hypertension) and instituting treatment to prevent negative outcomes and progression to disease. Tertiary prevention: Includes providing proper care to prevent further complications. Quaternary prevention: Includes intervening to prevent harm caused by medical treatment.

Question: 15

Which of the following chemotherapeutic agents is associated with sensorineural hearing loss and requires audiometric testing?

- A. Methotrexate
- B. Doxorubicin
- C. Cisplatin
- D. Steroids

Answer: C

Explanation:

Cisplatin, a cell cycle nonspecific platinum containing alkylating drug, is associated with bilateral sensorineural hearing loss (especially at high frequencies), so it is contraindicated with hearing impairment. All patients receiving cisplatin should have audiometric hearing tests before treatment and after each dose. It is recommended that Cisplatin not be administered if audiometric testing shows hearing acuity is outside of normal limits. Some studies have indicated that some hearing loss may be reversible.

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