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Impact of Tumor Regional Involvement on Active Surveillance Outcomes: Validation of the Cumulative Cancer Location Metric in a US Population.

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Title: Impact of Tumor Regional Involvement on Active Surveillance Outcomes: Validation of the Cumulative

Cancer Location Metric in a United States Population

Running Title: CCLO Validation in a US Active Surveillance Population

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STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

Background: Treatment progression for men on active surveillance (AS) for prostate cancer (PCa) is driven primarily by grade and volume progression on isolated prostate biopsies (PBx). As PCa is a multifocal disease, regional disease progression over time should be accounted for.

Objective: To validate the utility of the Cumulative Cancer Location (CCLO) metric, which assesses regional core involvement, as described by Erickson et al., in predicting AS outcomes in a North American cohort.

Design, setting, and participants: Single institutional retrospective chart review of all AS patients evaluated between 2015-2017.

Outcome Measurements and Statistical Analysis: CCLO defined as total number of cancerpositive sextant locations among all PBx to that point in time (range 1-6). Baseline demographics and clinical characteristics of the entire cohort were stratified by CCLO Δ , defined as the difference between the first and last CCLO. CCLO Δ then correlated to progression to treatment and treatment outcomes.

Results: 261 men met inclusion criteria. Though mean number of biopsies was slightly higher in the CCLO Δ 3-5 cohort than the CCLO Δ 0-2 cohort (p=0.006), mean AS follow-up time (3.3 years) was not significantly different (p=0.327). As CCLO Δ increased, the proportion of men remaining on AS decreased while the proportion of men receiving treatment increased (p<0.001). In men undergoing radical prostatectomy, higher CCLO Δ was not associated with higher rates of Gleason 7-10 (p=0.38) or pT3 (p=0.52) disease. However, as CCLO Δ increased, upgrading from final PBx to RP pathology increased while downgrading decreased (p=0.12). In Kaplan-Meier analyses, lower CCLO Δ and lower initial CLO score were associated with the highest 5-year treatment-free survival rates (p<0.001).

Conclusion: Higher regional cancer core involvement is associated with higher rates of progression to treatment in AS patients. The CCLO metric is a potentially useful modality in stratifying patients for treatment in AS patients among the North American cohort, while not compromising disease outcomes.

Patient Summary: In the North American population, cumulative cancer-positive locations among biopsies can be used to predict active surveillance outcomes in men with prostate cancer.

Keywords: active surveillance, prostate cancer, cumulative cancer location

1 INTRODUCTION

2 Since its introduction, widespread screening with serum prostate-specific antigen (PSA) has

facilitated earlier detection of prostate cancer (PCa).¹ Although the detection rate of PCa has

increased, a significant proportion of newly diagnosed PCa are found to be clinically localized

low-risk disease.^{2,3} With improved understanding of the indolent natural history of these low

risk prostate cancers, active surveillance (AS) has emerged as the standard of care for men with

low-risk disease, based on the strength of multiple prospective series that have demonstrated

excellent cancer-specific and overall survival without sacrificing an opportunity for cure in men

who progress to higher risk disease.⁴⁻⁸

also been reported at rates of 6-9%.4-6

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While significant variation exists among AS protocols and international guidelines, eligibility criteria for AS typically include a combination of PSA level, PSA density, clinical stage, and prostate biopsy (PBx) data (% positive cores and core volume) on both diagnostic and confirmatory biopsy. In men followed on AS, progression to intervention is most commonly due to pathologic upgrading or increased tumor volume, but clinicians may also consider PSA kinetics and radiographic upstaging. Treatment progression due to pathologic upgrading, increased tumor volume and fast PSA doubling times are reported in 35-50%, 2-63% and 21-44% of AS cohorts, respectively. Progression to definitive treatment due to patient anxiety has

Ultimately, the decision to proceed to intervention is driven by the results of the latest PBx,
often considered in isolation from prior PBx results. Given the multifocal nature of PCa and the
sampling error that accompanies freehand transrectal ultrasonography (TRUS) PBx, 15-19 Erickson
et al. described a novel method that considers the location of positive cores and regional
involvement over time. 20 They first described cumulative cancer locations (CCLO) as a distinct
and powerful predictor of AS outcomes (Supplementary Figure 1). Herein, we validate the utility
of the CCLO metric in predicting AS outcomes in a North American cohort.

PATIENTS AND METHODS

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Following institutional review board approval, retrospective chart review was performed on all AS patients evaluated in our institution between 2015-2017. At our institution, we utilize the AUA guidelines for active surveillance in men with very-low risk and low risk patients with localized PCa, and highly selective low volume localized intermediate risk PCa. 12 Men on active surveillance are followed routinely with PSA testing every 6 months and a PBx every 2 years; PBx may be completed earlier if there is evidence of a rising PSA or abnormal DRE. Patient demographics (age, race, clinical stage, preoperative PSA), clinical outcomes (AS progress, progression to treatment, PCa treatment modality), and radical prostatectomy (RP) pathology synoptic reports were also recorded. Pathology reports of all PBx for individual patients were abstracted for date of procedure, number and location of positive cores, and total Gleason score. Each PBx was reviewed and given a cancer location (CLO) score based on sextant location containing any positive cancer cores as described by Erickson et al.²⁰ Cumulative CLO (CCLO) was defined as the sum of all CLOs in all PBx to that point in time, while CCLOΔ was defined as the difference between the CCLO of the most recent PBx and the CLO of the first PBx (Supplementary Figure 1).

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All patients were stratified based on CCLOΔ scores (0, 1, 2, 3-5), which was then correlated to AS clinical outcomes. Descriptive statistics for demographic and outcome comparisons were performed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) for continuous variables and chi-square test for categorical variables. Kaplan-Meier survival curves were generated to evaluate treatment-free

- 49 progression stratified by CCLOΔ in the entire cohort and sub-stratified by initial CLO; results
- 50 were compared with the log-rank test. All statistical tests were two-tailed and a p-value of
- 51 <0.05 was considered statistically significant. Analyses were completed using SPSS®, version</p>
- 52 23.0.

53 RESULTS

Patient demographics

Table 1 highlights key demographic data for the entire cohort and stratified by CCLO Δ . Age, initial PSA, clinical T-stage and risk stratification were not significantly different amongst CCLO Δ cohorts. Although the mean number of PBx increased with higher CCLO Δ (p=0.006), the time on

active surveillance was not significantly different amongst cohorts (p=0.327).

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Clinical outcomes

Table 2 summarizes clinical outcomes stratified by CCLO Δ . Within the entire cohort, most patients remained on AS (55.2%), while 42.5% were recommended treatment, with 34.1% agreeing to undergo treatment. As CCLO Δ increased, the proportion of men remaining on AS decreased and the proportion of men receiving treatment increased (p<0.0001).

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Treatment indications and modalities

Table 3 and Supplementary Table 1 summarizes the treatment indications and treatment modalities utilized within each CCLOΔ cohort, respectively. Across all subsets, the primary indication for treatment recommendation and receipt was pathologic upgrading on PBx, ranging between 70-80%, while increased tumor volume was a much less common indication (20-30%). Radical prostatectomy (RP) was the most common treatment modality, with 54.7% of men receiving RP and 45.3% receiving radiation therapy with or without hormonal therapy.

Among the 6 (6.3%) patients who requested treatment due to anxiety, 4 (66.7%) underwent RP 73 while 2 (33.3%) underwent radiotherapy. 74 75 Analysis of Radical Prostatectomy pathology 76 Supplementary Table 2 highlights the pathology outcomes in the 52 (19.9%) men who 77 discontinued AS and underwent RP. Of the 4 patients who voluntarily discontinued AS, 2 had 78 79 Gleason 3+3 disease and 2 had Gleason 3+4 disease; all 4 had pT2 disease. A higher CCLOΔ was not significantly associated with higher rates of intermediate risk (Gleason 7) disease, high risk 80 (Gleason 8-10) disease or non-localized pT3 disease. 81 82 Progression of disease 83 Figure 1 depicts treatment-free survival (TFS) based on CCLOΔ for the entire population. Men 84 with CCLO $\Delta 0$ had the best treatment-free survival (5-year TFS 78%), while men with CCLO $\Delta 1$ -5 85 had a much higher rate of progression to treatment (5-year TFS 35-58%) (p < 0.001). Further 86 stratification based on patients initial CLO (Figure 2) demonstrated distinct populations with 87

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(Figure 2A).

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The swimmer's plots in Figure 3 depicts the entire patient cohort stratified by treatment receipt. Figure 3A are patients who remained on AS, including men who were recommended

superior TFS. Men with the best TFS (5-year TFS 90%) were those with initial CLO 1 and CCLO Δ0

- treatment but refused. Figure 3B are patients who received treatment, including those who
- chose treatment based on personal choice.

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DISCUSSION

AS has emerged as a standard of care for men with low-risk localized PCa, preserving an opportunity for curative intervention while minimizing overtreatment and associated adverse events. AS is characterized by a 30-40% rate of progression to treatment, driven primarily by grade and volume progression.²¹ Progression to treatment is typically determined based on a patient's most recent PBx, often in isolation from their prior PBx history. Even when considering volume of disease, clinicians commonly focus on the number and percentage of positive cores within each PBx rather than the cumulative location of positive cores.²² In 2018, Erickson et al. found that regional core involvement from the first two PBx (initial and confirmatory) may represent an additional metric to predicting progression of AS patients to treatment, with higher CCLO scores predicting poorer AS outcomes.²⁰ Importantly, the CCLO scores account for regional tumor burden from all prior PBx rather than the most recent PBx alone. As the study by Erickson et al. was conducted in 3 European centers with relatively homogenous populations, herein we independently validate the CCLO metric in a North American cohort.²³

While previous studies have established that total number of positive PBx cores is predictive of AS progression, Erickson et al. showed that CCLO Δ was a powerful predictor for AS outcomes. Moreover, their study reports that CCLO Δ outperformed number of positive cores in predicting AS outcomes, with higher CCLO Δ predicting shorter treatment free survival on AS, Gleason score upgrading and adverse findings on RP.²⁰ In our study, a higher CCLO Δ was also significantly associated with treatment recommendation and treatment receipt (p<0.0001).

Kaplan-Meier analyses indicate that patients with higher CCLO Δ have lower 5-year TFS rates. When stratified by initial volume of disease, it appeared that men with an initial CLO 1 and CCLO Δ 0 have the greatest benefit from AS, with 5-year TFS rates exceeding 90%. Even men with initial CLO 1 and CCLO Δ 1-5 had 5-year TFS rates of <65%. These are consistent with findings by Erickson et al., who demonstrated that higher CCLO at the time of confirmatory biopsy predicted significantly shorter TFS when stratified by the number of positive cores. These results indicate that while initial volume of disease impacts AS outcomes, cumulative volume progression over time must also be accounted for.

While Erickson et al. analyzed only the first two PBx (initial and confirmatory), in our study, we examined all PBx in patients during their entire AS follow-up, enabling better capture of temporal volume progression. ²⁰ The mean number of PBx in the entire cohort was 3.1, with some patients receiving up to 7 PBx during follow-up. While it would be easy to presume that a patient's CCLO would increase proportionately with time on AS, we found that time on AS was not significantly associated with CCLOΔ. The swimmer's plot (Figure 3) clearly illustrates the distinct clinical trajectories of each AS patient over time. Most of the patients who remained on AS (Figure 3A) had low CCLOΔ scores throughout their surveillance period; many of the men who remained on AS while having high CCLO scores were recommended treatment but refused. In contrast, when looking at the course of men ultimately progressing to treatment (Figure 3B), most of these men had higher CCLOΔ scores. However, the spread of initial CLO scores is remarkably similar between the groups – indicating that all these men start with low volume

disease, but a few progresses to higher volume regional disease over time. Yet, as seen by the side by side comparison of Figures 3A and 3B, there are a subset of patients who progress to higher volume disease later in their AS follow-up, demonstrating that cumulative volume progression need not always occur early. This reinforces the need for continued follow-up in all AS patients. These findings further suggest that $CCLO\Delta$ can be a useful surrogate in predicting outcomes and need for treatment in AS eligible patients in conjunction with other preestablished clinical characteristics.

Within our cohort, 42% of patients were recommended treatment while 34% eventually underwent treatment. These rates are consistent with prior literature regarding progression to treatment in the AS population.²¹ In contrast to Erickson et al., who found that higher CCLO was independently associated with adverse RP findings, in our subset of patients who underwent RP, higher CCLOΔ was not associated with an increased rate of Gleason 7-10 pathology on RP (p=0.38) or non-localized pT3 upstaging (p=0.52).²⁰ Interestingly, we found that as CCLOΔ increased, there was a suggestion, although not statistically significant, of increased upgrading from final PBx to RP pathology (p=0.12). However, in our cohort, 5.8% and 36.5% of patients had Gleason ≥8 disease and pT3 disease, respectively, on final RP pathology, which was consistent with previously reported rates in the literature for Gleason 8-10 upgrading (8.7-9.2%) and pT3 upstaging (27.7-43.0%).^{24,25} Consistent with our data, Dall'Era et al. also found no association between time on AS and adverse pathological outcomes at the time of RP.²⁶ Overall,

the literature supports that men on AS undergoing RP have favorable outcomes, which is likely related to the selective criteria of AS inclusion and the long natural history of low risk PCa.

As for patients who were recommended or received treatment, we found that Gleason upgrading was the most common reason for clinicians to discontinue AS and pursue treatment. In a study of 46 AS patients who subsequently underwent RP, Hong et al. demonstrated that Gleason upgrading from pattern 3 to 4 or 5 was the most common reason for AS discontinuation (45.7%) and is also the most prognosticating factor for unfavorable disease on RP. Increased tumor volume (21.7%) and increased percentage of cancer per biopsy core (8.7%) were among other common reasons for AS discontinuation. These findings suggest the negative predictive value of a low CCLO Δ .

Our study is not without its limitations. First, our study design is based on retrospective chart reviews with its inherent limitations. There was no central pathology review of PBx and final RP pathology. Our small sample size may also limit the ability to identify important associations with pathologic outcomes. Having data from a larger number of AS patients would also allow further analysis of patients with higher initial CLO and higher CCLO Δ and their association with AS outcomes. Additionally, regional core data depended on accurate labeling of PBx cores at the time of biopsy. Lastly, as a tertiary care facility, patient selection may be biased towards higher risk individuals and may not reflect the full spectrum of AS disease pathology. However,

- regardless of these limitations, this cohort still represents a moderate AS cohort with a mean 3-
- year AS follow-up.

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Our findings suggest that regional core involvement of PCa is associated with progression of disease in AS patients. The CCLO metric is a potentially useful modality among the North American cohort for risk stratification in patients managed with AS, without compromising disease outcomes.

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FIGURE LEGENDS

Table 1: Patient demographics

	All	CCLO Δ0	CCLO Δ1	CCLO Δ2	CCLO Δ3-5	<i>p</i> -value
Total, N (%)	261 (100.0)	91 (34.9)	80 (30.7)	62 (23.8)	28 (10.7)	
Age, years (mean ± SD)	69.5 ± 7.3	68.7 ± 7.4	69.6 ± 8.1	70.5 ± 6.2	69.5 ± 7.3	0.551
PSA, ng/mL (mean ± SD)	5.3 ± 2.8	5.2 ± 2.8	5.4 ± 2.8	5.5 ± 2.5	5.2 ± 3.2	0.904
Number of PBx (mean ± SD)	3.1 ± 1.4	2.8 ± 1.2	3.1 ± 1.4	3.2 ± 1.4	3.8 ± 1.5	0.006
Time on AS, years (mean ± SD)	3.3 ± 2.5	3.1 ± 2.5	3.6 ± 2.6	3.0 ± 2.4	3.7 ± 2.6	0.327
Initial CLO (median)	1	1	1	1.5	1	
Final CCLO (median)	2	1	2	3.5	4	
Gleason Score at 1st PBx						0.111
3+3, N (%)	243 (93.1)	85 (93.4)	76 (95.0)	54 (87.1)	28 (100.0)	
3+4, N (%)	18 (6.9)	6 (6.6.)	4 (5.0)	8 (12.9)	0 (0.0)	
Clinical T-stage						0.150
cT1, N (%)	238 (91.2)	84 (92.3)	69 (86.3)	57 (91.9)	28 (100.0)	
cT2, N (%)	23 (8.8)	7 (7.7)	11 (13.8)	5 (8.1)	0 (0.0)	
Risk Stratification						0.669
Very low, N (%)	65 (24.9)	22 (24.2)	19 (23.8)	15 (24.2)	9 (32.1)	
Low, N (%)	179 (68.6)	62 (68.1)	57 (71.2)	41 (66.1)	19 (67.9)	
Intermediate, N (%)	17 (6.5)	7 (7.7)	4 (5.0)	6 (9.7)	0 (0.0)	

Abbreviations: PSA – prostate-specific antigen; PBx – prostate biopsy; AS – active surveillance; CLO – cancer location; CCLO – cumulative cancer location

Table 2: Clinical outcomes for AS

Clinical Outcomes	All	CCLO Δ0	CCLO Δ1	CCLO Δ2	CCLO Δ3-5	<i>p</i> -value
Total, N (%)	261 (100.0)	91 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	62 (100.0)	28 (100.0)	
Remained on AS, N (%)	144 (55.2)	71 (78.0)	46 (57.5)	19 (30.6)	8 (28.6)	
Treatment recommended, N (%)	22 (8.4)	7 (7.7)	4 (5.0)	6 (9.7)	5 (17.9)	<0.0001
Treatment received, N (%)	89 (34.1)	12 (13.2)	29 (36.3)	33 (53.2)	15 (53.6)	
Treatment requested, N (%)	6 (2.3)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.3)	4 (6.5)	0 (0.0)	

Legend:

Treatment recommended: patients who were recommended treatment but chose to remain on AS Treatment requested: patients who voluntarily opted out of AS to undergo definitive treatment Treatment received: patients for whom treatment was recommended and received

Table 3: Treatment indications

	Indication for treatment	All	CCLO Δ0	CCLO Δ1	CCLO Δ2	CCLO Δ3-5
	Total	22 (100.0)	7 (100.0)	4 (100.0)	6 (100.0)	5 (100.0)
Treatment recommended,	Gleason upgrading	15 (68.2)	5 (71.4)	3 (75.0)	3 (50.0)	4 (80.0)
N (%)	Increased tumor volume	9 (40.9)	2 (28.6)	1 (25.0)	3 (50.0)	3 (60.0)
	Elevated PSA	2 (9.1)	1 (14.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (20.0)
	Total	89 (100.0)	12 (100.0)	29 (100.0)	33 (100.0)	15 (100.0)
Treatment received,	Gleason upgrading	72 (80.9)	9 (75.0)	26 (89.7)	25 (75.8)	12 (80.0)
N (%)	Increased tumor volume	21 (23.6)	2 (16.7)	5 (17.2)	10 (30.3)	4 (26.7)
	Elevated PSA	7 (7.9)	1 (8.3)	3 (10.3)	1 (3.0)	2 (13.3)

^{*}Treatment indications are not mutually exclusive

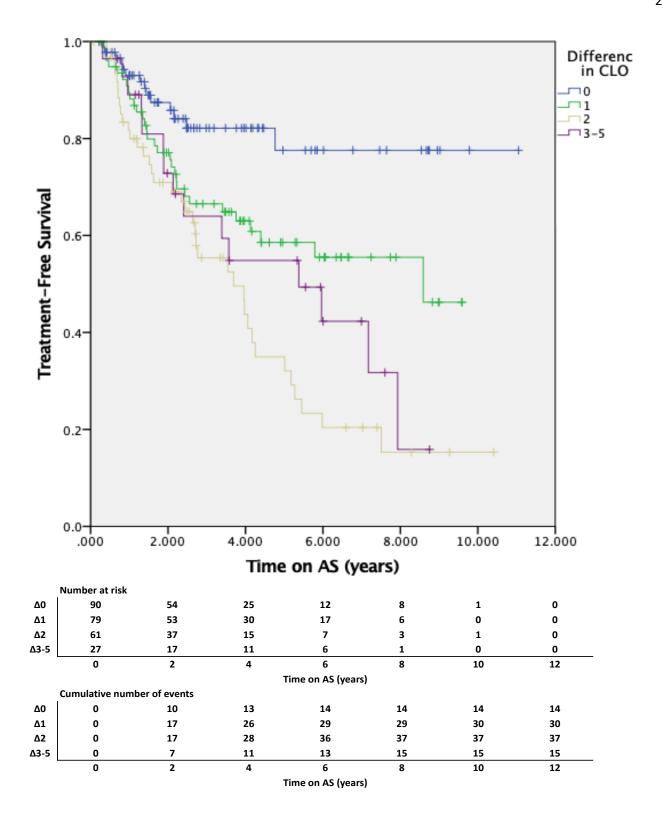


Figure 1: Treatment-free survival for the entire population, stratified by CCLO Δ ; Log-rank test: p < 0.001.

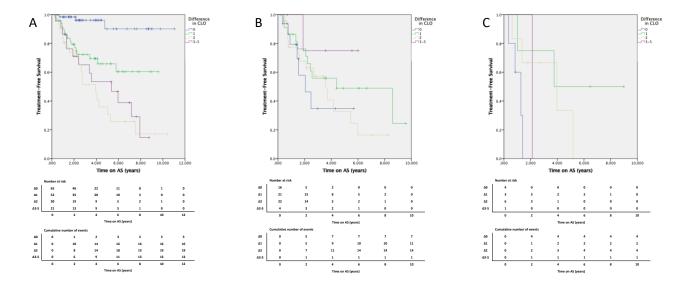
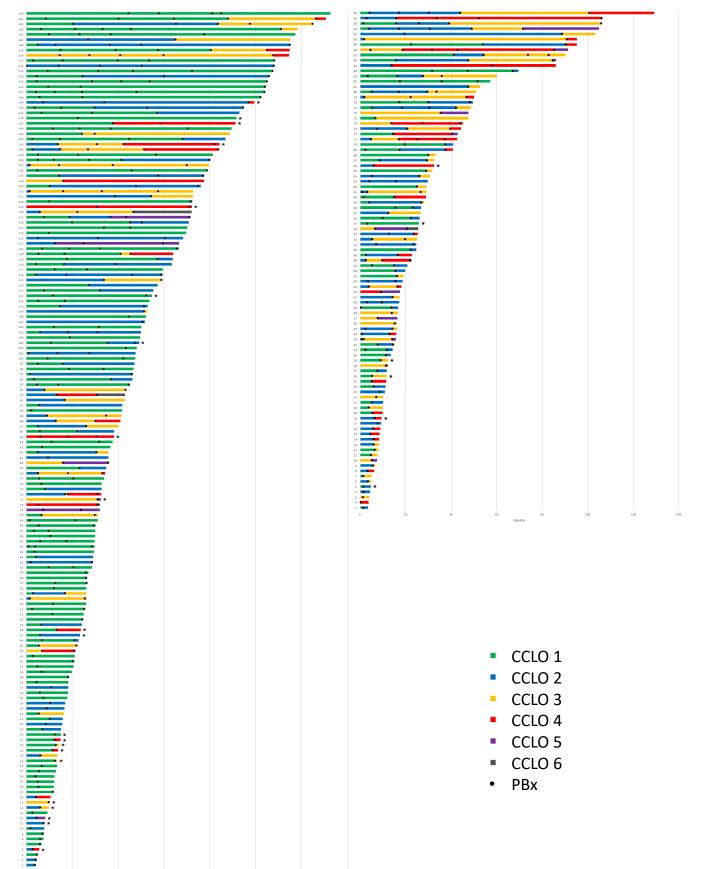


Figure 2: Treatment-free survival stratified by CCLOΔ; Subset analysis of men with initial CLO 1 (Figure 2A), initial CLO 2 (Figure 2B), initial CLO 3 (Figure 2C).



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Figure 3: Swimmer's Plots of the Entire Cohort, separated in men who stayed on AS (Figure 3A) and men who received treatment (Figure 3B).

Legend:

Each ● represents a single biopsy. Color coding represents the CCLO at the time based on all prior biopsies.

In Figure 3A, * represents men recommended for treatment but who refused.

In Figure 3B, * represents men who chose treatment as a personal choice.

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

Supplementary Table 1: Treatment modalities

Types of Treatment	All	CCLO Δ0	CCLO Δ1	CCLO Δ2	CCLO ∇>3
Total, N (%)	95 (100.0)	13 (100.0)	30 (100.0)	37 (100.0)	15 (100.0)
RP, N (%)	52 (54.7)	10 (76.9)	19 (63.3)	15 (40.5)	8 (53.3)
XRT +/- ADT, N (%)	43 (45.3)	3 (23.1)	11 (36.7)	22 (59.5)	7 (46.7)

Abbreviations: RP – radical prostatectomy; XRT – radiation therapy; ADT – hormonal therapy; CCLO – cumulative cancer location.

Supplementary Table 2: Analysis of RP patients

RP outcomes		All	CCLO Δ0	CCLO Δ1	CCLO Δ2	CCLO ∆≥3	<i>p</i> -value
Total		52 (100.0)	10 (100.0)	18 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	9 (100.0)	
	3+3	9 (17.3)	3 (30.0)	2 (11.1)	2 (13.3)	2 (22.2)	
Gleason score,	3+4	31 (59.6)	5 (50.0)	9 (50.0)	12 (80.0)	5 (55.5)	0.380
N (%)	4+3	9 (17.3)	1 (10.0)	6 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (22.2)	
	8-10	3 (5.8)	1 (10.0)	1 (5.6)	1 (6.7)	0 (0.0)	
Pathological T-	pT2	33 (63.5)	7 (70.0)	9 (50.0)	11 (73.3)	6 (66.7)	0.520
stage, N (%)	pT3	19 (36.5)	3 (30.0)	9 (50.0)	4 (26.7)	3 (33.3)	

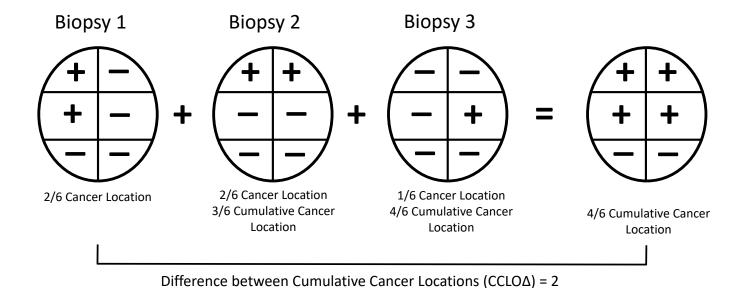
Abbreviations: RP – radical prostatectomy; CCLO – cumulative cancer location

Supplementary Table 3: Gleason Score comparison of final PBx to RP

RP outcomes	All	CCLO Δ0	CCLO Δ1	CCLO Δ2	CCLO ∆≥3	<i>p</i> -value
Total, N (%)	52 (100.0)	10 (100.0)	18 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	9 (100.0)	
Pathology downgrade, N (%)	7 (13.5)	3 (30.0)	4 (22.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
Pathology consistent, N (%)	35 (67.3)	7 (70.0)	11 (61.1)	10 (66.7)	7 (77.8)	0.119
Pathology upgrade, N (%)	10 (19.2)	0 (0.0)	3 (16.7)	5 (33.3)	2 (22.2)	1

Abbreviations: PBx – prostate biopsy; RP – radical prostatectomy; CCLO – cumulative cancer location

^{*}Treatment modalities are not mutually exclusive



- CLO Cancer Location
- CCLO Cumulative Cancer Location

Supplementary Figure 1: A sample patient on active surveillance for prostate cancer with three prior prostate biopsies. Based on individual biopsies, the patient only has up to 2 cancer-positive locations (CLO). After aggregating CLOs among all prior biopsies, cumulative cancer-positive location (CCLO) is 4. The CCLO Δ in this patient, defined by subtracting final CCLO with initial CLO, is 2.