

Stage migration

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The situation when the survival of a certain disease seems to have improved over time, when in fact it's the diagnostic tests that have improved and not the survival of the disease itself.

Before attributing a perceived change in prognosis to an improvement in patient care, look at the overall mortality rates and make sure that stage migration is the cause.

	# Patients	# Died	Case-fatality rate	
				2015
Stage 1 No metastases	400	70	17.5%	
Stage 2 Metastases	400	200	50%	
	800	270	34%	
				2016
Stage 1 No metastases	200	10	5%	A new test was introduced that could detect micrometastases. As a result the stage-specific case-fatality rates changed while the overall case-fatality rates stayed the same.
Micrometastases	200	60	30%	
Stage 2 Metastases	400	200	50%	
	600	260	43%	
	800	270	34%	