

Word for Word

When *progress* is not good news



The words *progress*, *progression*, and *progressive* generally have a positive connotation, but in the context of cancer, they mean that the disease is spreading, becoming more severe, or advancing in stage.

Examples:

The computed tomography scans showed progressive disease in the patient's lungs.

In the phase II trial, the researchers found that the combination therapy halted disease progression.

It's important to note that it is the disease, not the patient, that progresses.

Incorrect:

The patient progressed after 2 cycles of chemotherapy.

Patient progression was more pronounced in arm 1 than in arm 2 of the study.

This type of language, and phrases such as "the patient failed chemotherapy" or "the patient relapsed," should be avoided because it implies that patients can somehow control--and are therefore to blame for--the worsening of their disease.

Bibliography

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--Dawn Chalaire

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