A prognostic biomarker is **one that indicates an increased (or decreased) likelihood of a future clinical event, disease recurrence or progression in an identified population**. Prognostic biomarkers are measured at a defined baseline, which may include a background treatment. A prognostic biomarker provides information about the patients overall cancer outcome, regardless of therapy, whilst a predictive biomarker gives information about the effect of a therapeutic intervention. A predictive biomarker can be a target for therapy.

Prognostic biomarkers **enable identification of patients with a more aggressive tumor evolution**, while predictive biomarkers permit the identification of patients with a higher probability of responding or not to a specific treatment. Several biomarkers are currently widely employed in gastrointestinal cancers.

The widely used prognostic markers in cancers include **stage, size, grade, node and metastasis (**The spread of cancer cells from the place where they first formed to another part of the body. In metastasis, cancer cells break away from the original (primary) tumor, travel through the blood or lymph system, and form a new tumor in other organs or tissues of the body**)**.