

“Is it a tumour?”

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A 58-year-old woman with a history of depression presented with fatigue, depressed mood, sleep disturbance, poor appetite, poor concentration, decreased activity, and aches.

The patient became weaker and was hospitalized. The weakness worsened on her left, and fluctuated with a dramatic presentation.

Her examination revealed:

- a possible visual field defect on the left,
- no neglect,
- 4/5 muscle strength on the left,
- symmetrical reflexes, and
- no dysmetria.

Conversion disorder was entertained. A computed tomography scan showed a large cystic mass involving both cerebral hemispheres crossing the corpus callosum (Figure 1). A subsequent enhanced scan showed ring-enhancement of the mass.

Treatment options for brain tumours include:

- oral or intravenous steroids,
- stereotactic biopsy or debulking surgery, and
- radiation therapy.

Factors considered prior to surgery were:

- tumour location,
- morphology,
- presumed pathology,
- patient status,
- surgical risk, and
- patient preferences.

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Figure 1. An enhanced computed tomography scan showed a large cystic ring-enhancing mass involving both cerebral hemispheres crossing the corpus callosum.

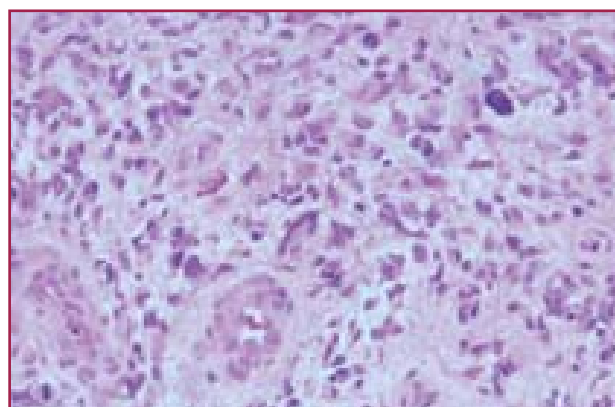


Figure 2. The biopsy showed a necrotising tumour composed of poorly differentiated astrocytic cells, namely a glioblastoma, a malignant primary brain tumour.

Brain Tumour

The patient underwent stereotactic biopsy, and the tumour was confirmed as glioblastoma multiforme (Figure 2). Most gliomas are not curable. Median post-operative survival rate is 14 weeks with supportive care, and up to two years with radiation. After three months, the patient succumbed to her illness. CME

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Net Readings

1. The American Brain Tumor Association:
www.abta.org
2. Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada:
www.braintumour.ca

www.stacommunications.com



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Alzheimer Disease

Dispelling the myths

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Myth 6 Alzheimer Disease is preventable.

Reality: Because there is no known cause for Alzheimer Disease, there is no conclusive evidence that Alzheimer Disease can be prevented. There is, however, a growing amount of evidence that lifestyle choices that keep mind and body fit may help reduce the risk. These choices include physical exercise, a healthy diet including fresh fruits, vegetables and fish, as well as keeping your brain active.