

Pediatric Neurology: Chapter 99. Central nervous system tumors (Handbook of Clinical Neurology)

Grill Jacques, Owens Cormac

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Central nervous system tumors are the most frequent malignant tumor in children and the main cause of death in this age group after traffic accidents. The current estimates are that one adult in 2500 is a survivor of a brain tumor that occurred during childhood. These tumors are particularly heterogeneous in terms of histology/biology, treatment, and outcome. They share, however, a high risk of neurological and cognitive morbidity due to the disease itself and the treatment modalities (radiotherapy, surgery, and chemotherapy). Diagnosis is frequently delayed because symptoms are usually nonspecific at the beginning of the evolution. Posterior fossa is the most frequent site and the tumors present most frequently with signs of intracranial hypertension. Supratentorial tumors are more frequent in infants and in adolescents; seizures are not uncommon, especially for benign tumors. When adjuvant treatment is needed, radiotherapy is usually the mainstay apart from some histologies where chemotherapy may be sufficient: low-grade gliomas, desmoplastic medulloblastomas, malignant glial tumors in infants. Multidisciplinary care is best performed in tertiary care centers and should include early rehabilitation programs soon after surgery.



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