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Intramedullary Hemangioblastoma – Local Experience of a Tertiary Clinic

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Abstract

Background: Intramedullary hemangioblastomas are rare benign tumors, occurring sporadically or in von Hippel-Lindau disease.

Methods: We describe our local surgical experience with intramedullary hemangioblastomas. Clinical, imaging and surgical data from five consecutive hemangioblastoma cases identified from a series of 59 patients with intramedullary tumors treated between 2003-2009 are reviewed.

Results: The mean age of the patients was 39.6 years (range 21-56). All of them were symptomatic and two patients had von Hippel-Lindau disease with associated posterior fossa hemangioblastomas. All tumors were preoperatively diagnosed as hemangioblastomas based on magnetic resonance findings. All patients underwent surgery with complete removal of the tumor in 4 cases and a partial removal in a case with extension towards the anterior part of the cord. Good neurological outcome was noted in four cases while in the fifth, complicated with a significant intraoperative hemorrhage, a fully reversible aggravation of neurological status occurred.

Conclusions: Spinal cord hemangioblastomas are surgically curable tumors. Microsurgical complete resection is the standard of care and can be performed with good neurological outcome in most of the cases. Ventral tumor location and important intraoperative bleeding are associated with less optimal outcome.

Key words: hemangioblastomas, von Hippel-Lindau disease, surgery

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