Optic Nerve Glioma

Gliomas are tumors that grow in various parts of the brain. Optic gliomas can affect:

- One or both of the optic nerves, which carry visual information to the brain from each eye
- The optic chiasm, the area where the optic nerves cross each other in front of the hypothalamus of the brain

Causes:

Optic gliomas are rare. The cause of optic gliomas is unknown. Most optic gliomas are slow-growing and noncancerous (benign) and occur in children, almost always before age 20.

There is a strong association between optic glioma and neurofibromatosis Type 1

Symptoms:

- Involuntary eyeball movement
- One or both eyes may bulge outward
- Squinting
- Vision loss in one or both eyes
- Leads to eventual blindness
- May be a loss of peripheral vision or vision loss may be more general

When the diagnosis is in question, the presence of an intraconal mass can often be detected through CT scanning.

MRI, however, is the preferred method for definitive evaluation of optic nerve glioma.

Treatments:

The treatment of OPGs can be divided into four different arms: observation and surveillance, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and surgical intervention. Because of the variable and unpredictable course of this disease entity, the adequate treatment method has been controversial.
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The outlook is highly variable. Early treatment improves the chance of a good outcome. Many tumors are curable with surgery, while others return.

Normally, the growth of the tumor is very slow, and the condition remains stable for long periods of time. However, in adults and some childhood cases where the optic chiasm is involved, the tumor behaves aggressively.

References:


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