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Local application of gamma-linolenic acid in the treatment of human gliomas.

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Abstract

gamma-Linolenic acid (GLA) has been shown to have selective tumoricidal action both in vitro and in vivo. Earlier, in a limited clinical study, we have demonstrated that intra-tumoral administration of GLA can induce regression of human gliomas. In an extension of this study, we evaluated the effect of intra-cerebral injection of GLA on normal dog brain and in 15 patients with malignant gliomas. Histopathological examination revealed that GLA is not cytotoxic to the normal dog brain cells. Administration of 10 mg of GLA via a cerebral reservoir placed in the tumour bed, at the rate of 1 mg/day over a period of 10 days, revealed that GLA is not only safe and non-toxic but can also regress cerebral gliomas as evaluated by computerised tomography and increased survival of the patients by 1.5-2 years. Based on these results and our earlier in vitro study, we suggest that GLA is a safe anti-tumour agent and recommend its use in the management of human gliomas.

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