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High-grade glioma in children under 5 years of age: A chemotherapy only approach with the BBSFOP protocol

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to evaluate a chemotherapy strategy that avoids radiotherapy in first-line treatment of young children with high-grade glioma. A total of 21 children under 5 years of age received the BBSFOP protocol, comprising seven cycles of three drug pairs (carboplatin/procarbazine, cisplatin/etoposide and vincristine/cyclophosphamide) administered over a 16 month period. Radiotherapy was performed in case of recurrence/progression. Median age at diagnosis was 23 months. Histology was classified as World Health Organisation (WHO) grade III in 13 and grade IV in 8. Of the 13 children with a residual tumour, chemotherapy induced 2 partial responses (PR), 1 minor response (MR) and 1 stable disease (SD) with no recurrent disease. Five-year progression-free survival was 35% and 5-year overall survival was 59%, with a median follow-up of 5.2 years. At the last

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update, 12 children were alive (10 without radiotherapy). In conclusion, this study shows that an adjuvant chemotherapy first approach is safe and allows radiotherapy to be avoided in selected children.

Keywords: High-grade glioma; Infants; Chemotherapy; Oligodendroglioma; Astrocytoma

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