

Diffuse brainstem gliomas in children: should we or shouldn't we biopsy?



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Abstract

The decision to biopsy diffuse pontine gliomas in children remains controversial. There have been many publications over the last 30 years aiming to address this issue. The prognosis for these patients remains extremely poor regardless of treatment and many authors advocate that biopsy carries significant risk for little or no clinical benefit. However, with an increasing knowledge of tumour biology and genetics there is the potential for specific treatments tailored for individual tumours based on their biological or genetic characteristics. The progress of such science in the first instance requires histological diagnosis as part of well conducted clinical trials, then, when treatments have been developed, biopsy samples will be needed to identify the tumours that may respond to such treatments. The authors believe that there is an increasing need for performing a biopsy of these lesions.

Keywords: Chemotherapy; diffuse brainstem glioma; pontine; radiotherapy; stereotactic biopsy

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