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Psychological intervention in young brain tumor survivors: the efficacy of the cognitive behavioural approach.

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PURPOSE: Cognitive and behavioural therapy (CBT) is often used to treat behavioural and emotional disorders in children, and its efficacy has been described in several studies. As behavioural and emotional disorders are frequent sequelae in brain tumor survivors, the goal of this work is to describe the efficacy of a CBT intervention in the treatment of young brain tumor survivors. **METHODS:** Forty young patients, aged 4-18 years, were included in the study. The treatment group, composed of 17 patients, received sessions of CBT. The Child Behaviour Checklist 4-18 (CBCL/4-18) and the Vineland Adaptive Behavioural Scales (VABS) were administered to parents at the beginning and at the end of the hospitalisation. The statistical significance of changes for clinical subjects during the CBT administration was estimated. **RESULTS:** With regard to the CBCL/4-18, the clinical group showed a significant advantage on the withdrawn, somatic complaints, social problems, attention problems, internalising and total problem scales. On the VABS, the treatment group improved to a significantly greater extent in the social skills domain. **CONCLUSIONS:** These results substantiate our assumption that CBT is an effective intervention for young patients surviving brain tumors and may be particularly helpful to younger individuals in managing cancer-related limitations.

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