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[J Med Assoc Thai](#). 2010 Aug;93(8):903-10.

Duration of symptoms in brain tumors: influencing factors and its value in predicting malignant tumors.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Although brain tumor is a common neurosurgical condition, diagnosis is generally made after long duration of symptoms. This may have negative impact on treatment outcome.

OBJECTIVE: Study the duration of symptoms of brain tumor, how it is influenced by various factors, and find their value in predicting malignant tumors.

MATERIAL AND METHOD: The authors retrospectively reviewed 185 patients with pathologically proven brain tumors. Pertinent data including age, types of tumors, locations of tumors, symptoms, and duration of symptoms were analyzed by univariate and multivariate analysis.

RESULTS: There were 70 males and 115 females. The mean age at diagnosis was 47.3 years. The average duration of symptoms was 471 days with median of 120 days. On univariate analysis, hormone symptoms ($p = 0.001$), age more than 45 years old ($p = 0.005$), malignant tumor ($p < 0.001$), auditory symptoms ($p = 0.004$), and motor symptoms ($p < 0.001$) had significant influence on duration of symptom. In multivariate analyses, malignant types of tumor, age, and hormonal symptoms were significant. In addition, there was higher risk of malignant brain tumor in patients with duration of symptoms 1 month or less ($p < 0.001$).

CONCLUSION: Certain factors were associated with longer duration of symptoms in brain tumors. This information may lead to early diagnosis of brain tumors. Furthermore, duration of symptoms of 1 month or less was suggestive of malignant brain tumors.

PMID: 20718165 [PubMed - in process]