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Hemorrhage of brain metastasis from non-small cell lung cancer post gefitinib therapy: two case reports and review of the literature.

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BACKGROUND: Gefitinib is one of the small molecule inhibitors of epidermal growth factor receptor tyrosine kinase (EGFR TKIs). Clinical trials have demonstrated it is effective for treatment of a subset of patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). Gefitinib has been generally considered to be a relatively safe agent. Besides a small proportion of fatal interstitial pneumonia, the common adverse drug reactions of gefitinib include diarrhea and skin rash, which are generally mild and reversible. Herein, we report the first two cases of brain metastasis hemorrhage that might be involved with the use of gefitinib. **CASE PRESENTATION:** Two patients with brain metastasis from NSCLC developed brain hemorrhage after gefitinib therapy. The hemorrhage in one case occurred one month after gefitinib combined with whole brain radiation therapy (WBRT), and in the another case hemorrhage developed slowly within brain metastases eight months post gefitinib monotherapy for diffuse pulmonary metastasis from a lung cancer undergone surgical removal previously. **CONCLUSION:** We speculate brain hemorrhage could be one of the adverse drug reactions of gefitinib treatment for NSCLC and suggest clinicians be aware of this possible rare entity. More data are needed to confirm our findings, especially when gefitinib is used in the settings of brain metastases from NSCLC or other origins.

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