Thalidomide as Palliative Treatment in Patients with Advanced Secondary Glioblastoma.


Abstract

Background: For its numerous abilities including sedation, we have been using thalidomide (TH) as the 'last therapeutic option' in patients with advanced gliomas. We noticed that a small subgroup, i.e. patients with secondary glioblastoma (GBM, whose GBM has evolved over several months or years from a less malignant glioma), survived for prolonged periods. Therefore, we retrospectively evaluated the outcomes of patients with secondary GBM treated with TH at our centre. Patients and Methods: Starting in the year 2000, we have studied 23 patients (13 females, 10 males, with a median age of 31.5 years) with secondary GBM who have received palliative treatment with TH 100 mg at bedtime. All patients had previously undergone radiotherapy and received at least 1 and up to 5 regimens of chemotherapy. Results: The median duration of TH administration was 4.0 months (range 0.8-32). The median duration of overall survival after the start of TH therapy was 18.3 months (range 0.8-57). Eleven patients with secondary GBM survived longer than 1 year. Symptomatic improvement was most prominent in the restoration of a normal sleep pattern. Conclusion: The palliative effects of TH, especially the normalization of a sleep pattern, were highly valued by patients and families. The prolongation of survival of patients with secondary GBM has not been reported previously. © 2014 S. Karger AG, Basel.

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