Many case studies reported psychiatric symptoms during the months before a brain tumor (BT) is diagnosed. Unfortunately, these symptoms are rarely considered as a warning of an organic problem and patients are regularly misoriented towards psychiatric care. Knowing better what psychiatric symptoms look like in patients with a BT would help to diagnose it sooner, which would obviously benefit the patient. The present study aims to quantify the prevalence and further describe psychiatric symptoms occurring before a BT diagnosis. The presence of psychiatric manifestations was systematically investigated in 100 patients with a first diagnosis of BT. Overall, 85% of the patients reported at least one psychiatric symptom present before the BT diagnosis, most often depressive ones. Somatic manifestations of depression (loss of energy, changes in appetite...) were more often reported than affective or cognitive ones (no negative thought content: no pessimism, no guilty feelings, no worthlessness...). The present research stresses the high prevalence of psychiatric symptoms, especially depressive-like ones, occurring before a BT is diagnosed and provides a first description of these symptoms, as a basis of practical recommendations.

KEYWORDS: Depression; Brain tumor – Psychiatric symptoms

PMID: 28892315