Systematic Review of Hearing Preservation After Radiotherapy for Vestibular Schwannoma.

Coughlin AR, Willman TJ, Gubbels SP

Division of Otolaryngology, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Madison, Wisconsin.

OBJECTIVE: To determine the long-term hearing preservation rate for spontaneous vestibular schwannoma treated by primary radiotherapy.

DATA SOURCES: The MEDLINE/PubMed, Web of Science, Cochrane Reviews, and EMBASE databases were searched using a comprehensive Boolean keyword search developed in conjunction with a scientific librarian. English language papers published from 2000 to 2016 were evaluated.

STUDY SELECTION: Inclusion criteria: full articles, pretreatment and posttreatment audiograms or audiogram based scoring system, vestibular schwannoma only tumor type, reported time to follow-up, published after 1999, use of either Gamma Knife or linear accelerator radiotherapy.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA: case report or series with fewer than five cases, inadequate audiometric data, inadequate time to follow-up, neurofibromatosis type 2 exceeding 10% of study population, previous treatment exceeding 10% of study population, repeat datasets, use of proton beam therapy, and non-English language.

DATA EXTRACTION: Two reviewers independently analyzed papers for inclusion. Class A/B, 1/2 hearing was defined as either pure tone average less than or equal to 50 db with speech discrimination score more than or equal to 50%, American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) Hearing Class A or B, or Gardner-Robertson Grade I or II. Aggregate data were used when individual data were not specified.

DATA SYNTHESIS: Means were compared with student t test.

CONCLUSIONS: Forty seven articles containing a total of 2,195 patients with preserved Class A/B, 1/2 hearing were identified for analysis. The aggregate crude hearing preservation rate was 58% at an average reporting time of 46.6 months after radiotherapy treatment. Analysis of time-based reporting shows a clear trend of decreased hearing preservation extending to 10-year follow-up. This data encourages a future long-term controlled trial.