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## Malignant cerebellar astrocytomas: clinico-pathological remarks on 10 cases

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### Abstract

**Background:** Malignant glioma represent the 3rd;4th most frequent cause of death from cancer. The cerebellar site is rare and life expectancy with cerebellar anaplastic astrocytoma is still dismal. The growth and clinical-pathological remarks of the tumor, is similar to the others gliomas of the central nervous system. MRI with Gd is the most useful diagnostic approach but lacks of specificity in detecting highly differentiated neoplasia areas.

**Methods:** Between 1980 and 1994 10 cases of malignant cerebellar astrocytomas were operated at the Neurosurgical Institute, Department of NeuroSciences, of Roma "La Sapienza" University. All patients were investigated pre-and postoperatively by CT scan with i.v. administration and/or MRI with Gd when possible.

**Results:** Of the 10 patients who followed various protocols, 7 died. Average survival was 13.7 months (range 5-21 months). 3 patients were still alive 12, 15 and 18 months after surgery. In 3 cases (50%) there was also radiological evidence of spinal cord spreading.

**Conclusions:** Like cerebral lesions, malignant cerebellar astrocytoma still a pathology with a real unsatisfactory prognosis. Our experience probably showed that spinal spreading is underestimated. For this reason we believe that, despite the limited number of cases treated so far, it is important to extend postoperatively the radiotherapy to the entire spinal cord in all patients.