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Pattern of care of brain tumor patients in the last months of life: analysis of a cohort of 3045 patients in the last 10 years

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Abstract

Background: End-of-life in patients with brain cancer presents special challenges, and palliative care approach is underutilized. Patients with brain cancer, in the last months of life, receive frequent hospital readmissions, highlighting bad end-of-life care quality. Early integration of palliative care improves quality of care in advanced stage of disease and patient's quality of death.

Purpose: We retrospectively analyzed a consecutive series of patients with brain cancer discharged after diagnosis to evaluate pattern of treatment and rate of hospital readmission in the last months of life.

Design: Data were collected from the Lazio Region Healthcare database.

Setting: Adult patients discharged with diagnosis ICD-9 191.* between January 1, 2010, and December 31, 2019 were included.

Results: A total of 6672 patients were identified, and 3045 deaths were included. In the last 30 days 33% were readmitted to the hospital and 24.2% to the emergency room. 11.7% were treated with chemotherapy and 6% with radiotherapy. Most indicators of end-of-life care showed wide variability by hospital of discharge.

Conclusions: Strategies to improve quality of care at the end of life and to decrease re-hospitalization and futile treatments are becoming increasingly important to improve quality of death and reduce healthcare costs. Variability observed by hospital of discharge indicates the lack of a standard approach to end-of-life care.

Keywords: Brain tumors; End of life care; Outcome assessment; Palliative care; Pattern of care.

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