

Malignant Tumours of the Brain and Spinal Cord in Bahrain: Patterns of Incidence over a Fifty-Two Year Period

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Objective: To review malignant neoplasms of the brain and spinal cord in Bahrain, and to compare the incidence with other parts of the world.

Design: A retrospective study

Setting: All Histopathology Departments in Bahrain

Method: Data relating to all malignant CNS neoplasms which were diagnosed histologically in Bahrain were extracted from the relevant patient medical records. All tumors were histologically diagnosed in Bahrain between 1952 and 2004.

Results: There were 103 malignant CNS tumors representing 1.4% of all malignancies histologically reported during the same period. Of the 103 patients, 77 (74.8%) were Bahraini. Of the Bahraini patients, thirty-one (40.3%) were female and the male: female ratio was 1.48:1. Sixty-two of the 77 Bahraini tumors (80.5%) were primary brain tumors, nine (11.7%) were primary spinal cord tumors, and six (7.8%) were secondary tumors. Astrocytoma and medulloblastoma were the commonest primary malignant CNS neoplasms in both adults and children.

Conclusion: The apparent incidence of malignant brain and spinal cord neoplasms in Bahrain is very low. The small Bahraini population, inefficient registration of cancers, and the lack of routine hospital autopsies are contributory factors for the low numbers observed.