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Psychiatric Symptoms in Patients with Brain Tumors.

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Introduction: Brain tumors (BT) sometimes present with psychiatric symptoms, with or without neurological ones, and BT patients with psychiatric symptoms are sometimes mistakenly oriented towards psychiatric/psychological care. Case studies concluded that atypical psychiatric symptoms should lead to neurological investigation, but no description of such atypical symptoms has been provided.

Objectives: The present study aims to quantify the prevalence and further describe psychiatric symptoms occurring before a BT diagnosis.

Aims: We aim to sensitize physicians to consider more systematically neurological options, and to provide them with a description of atypical pattern of psychiatric symptoms occurring in patients with BT.

Methods: Fifty patients with a first diagnosis of BT (21 males and 29 females, aged 25-81 years) completed an anamnestic interview, the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview, and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II), in order to investigate and describe current and past psychiatric symptoms. A neuropsychological evaluation was also conducted.

Results: Most patients (45/50) reported at least one psychiatric symptom during the months before the BT diagnosis. About half of them presented anxious or depressive symptoms according to the clinical interviews and the BDI-II. Interestingly, somatic symptoms of depression (tiredness, slower reactions, appetite changes...) were often reported, in contrast to cognitive ones (guilt, self-criticalness...). The influence of the BT characteristics and the neuropsychological profile will be discussed.

Conclusions: The results confirm the frequent occurrence of psychiatric symptoms before a BT diagnosis and provide a first description of these symptoms, as the basis of future recommendations for physicians.