

Efficacy of concomitant and adjuvant temozolomide in glioblastoma treatment. A multicentre randomized study

Skuteczność skojarzonego i wspomagającego leczenia temozolomidem u chorych z glejakiem wielopostaciowym. Wieloośrodkowe badanie z randomizacją

Dariusz Szczepanek¹, Andrzej Marchel², Marek Moskała³, Mariusz Krupa³, Przemysław Kunert², Tomasz Trojanowski¹

¹Katedra i Klinika Neurochirurgii i Neurochirurgii Dziecięcej, Uniwersytet Medyczny w Lublinie

²Katedra i Klinika Neurochirurgii, Warszawski Uniwersytet Medyczny

³Katedra i Klinika Neurochirurgii, Collegium Medicum, Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie

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Abstract

Background and purpose: The common treatment in patients with newly diagnosed glioblastoma multiforme is the ultimately radical surgical removal of the tumour combined with radiotherapy. This study compared safety and efficacy of radiotherapy alone with radiotherapy combined with temozolomide (TMZ) given before, during, and after radiotherapy.

Material and methods: The patients operated on for glioblastoma multiforme during the first 21 postoperative days were randomly assigned to the group treated with radiotherapy alone (involved-field radiotherapy in 2 Gy fractions daily five times a week up to the total of 60 Gy over 6 weeks of treatment) or to the group treated with radiotherapy and TMZ, initially in the dose of 200 mg/m² during 5 postoperative days and after 23 days followed by 75 mg/m² of body surface area daily, 7 days a week (from the first to the last day of radiotherapy). On completion of radiotherapy, five complementary courses of TMZ were introduced (150-200 mg/m² for 5 days, repeated every 28 days). The primary outcome measure was overall survival.

Results: Fifty-eight patients from 3 centres were included in the study. The mean age of patients was 55 years and all the patients underwent a surgical procedure of glioblastoma removal. The mean overall survival in the group treated with TMZ was 16.0 months, whereas in the group with radiotherapy alone the overall survival reached 12.5 months. 24-month

Streszczenie

Wstęp i cel pracy: U chorych z nowo rozpoznanymi glejakami wielopostaciowymi ogólnie przyjętym postępowaniem jest maksymalnie radykalne operacyjne usunięcie guza uzupełnione napromienianiem. W przedstawionym badaniu porównywano radioterapię jako jedyną metodę leczenia z radioterapią skojarzoną z temozolomidem podawanym przed napromienianiem, w jego trakcie i po zakończeniu radioterapii, oceniając bezpieczeństwo i skuteczność obu metod terapeutycznych.

Materiał i metody: Pacjentów operowanych z powodu glejaka wielopostaciowego w ciągu 21 dni po zabiegu przydzielano losowo do grupy, w której stosowano wyłącznie radioterapię (napromienianie na pola wydzielone we frakcjach po 2 Gy dziennie 5 razy w tygodniu do całkowitej dawki 60 Gy w ciągu 6 tygodni leczenia), lub grupy leczonej napromienianiem i temozolomidem, początkowo w okresie pooperacyjnym 200 mg/m² przez 5 dni, następnie po 23 dniach dawką 75 mg/m² powierzchni ciała dziennie przez 7 dni w tygodniu (od pierwszego do ostatniego dnia radioterapii). Po zakończeniu napromieniania prowadzono pięć uzupełniających kursów leczenia temozolomidem (150–200 mg/m² przez 5 dni powtarzanych co 28 dni). Główną miarą wyniku leczenia był całkowity czas przeżycia.

Wyniki: Do badania włączono 58 chorych z 3 ośrodków. Mediana wieku pacjentów wynosiła 55 lat, wszyscy chorzy byli

Correspondence address: Dariusz Szczepanek, Katedra i Klinika Neurochirurgii i Neurochirurgii Dziecięcej, ul. Jaczewskiego 8, 20-954 Lublin, e-mail: dariusz.szczepanek@am.lublin.pl

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survival reached 23% in patients treated with TMZ and 6.7% in those who received radiotherapy only. Haematological complications of third or fourth degree were present in 10% of patients treated with radiotherapy and TMZ.

Conclusions: The introduction of TMZ before, during and after radiotherapy for newly diagnosed glioblastoma multiforme gives clinically and statistically significant improvement of survival with unremarkably increased toxicity of the treatment.

Key words: brain tumour, glioblastoma, temozolomide, radiotherapy.

Introduction

High-grade gliomas – glioblastoma multiforme and anaplastic astrocytoma – account for more than 20% of brain tumours in adults. According to current knowledge, median time of survival after diagnosis does not exceed 12 months, and even in the presence of favourable outcome predictors, most patients die within 24 months [1-3].

The current standard of care involves maximally radical surgical excision of the tumour followed by post-operative radiotherapy. Various forms of chemotherapy combined with surgery and radiotherapy are used in case of recurrence or in clinical trials. So far, adjuvant chemotherapy has not shown unequivocal improvement of the efficacy of treatment in comparison to the standard therapy that combines surgery and radiotherapy. Despite the advances in surgical techniques, introduction of new methods of radiotherapy and various chemotherapeutic regimens, the prognosis in high-grade gliomas remains poor, and the improvement of survival after chemotherapy is modest [2,4-6].

There is an ongoing search for new chemotherapy and radiotherapy methods that might improve the efficacy of treatment in those neoplasms [2,7].

Recently, temozolomide (TMZ) has been introduced to clinical use as a method of treatment in glia-derived brain neoplasms [2,7,8].

Clinical trials conducted in many departments assessed various chemotherapy regimens combined with radiotherapy. None of the phase III randomized trials that assessed the efficacy of nitrosourea-derived compounds as adjuvant therapy showed substantial improve-

ment of the long-term survival when compared with radiotherapy alone as the only adjuvant treatment after surgery [9]. Several studies showed a higher percentage of long-term survival in patients who received additional chemotherapy [10,11].

operowani z powodu glejaka wielopostaciowego. Mediana czasu przeżycia w grupie otrzymującej temozolomid wyniosła 16 miesięcy, natomiast wśród otrzymujących radioterapię 12,5 miesiąca. Przeżycie 24-miesięczne osób w grupie skojarzonego leczenia wyniosło 23%, natomiast w ramieniu kontrolnym – 6,7%. Powikłania hematologiczne 3. lub 4. stopnia pojawiły się u 10% otrzymujących radioterapię łącznie z temozolomidem.

Wnioski: Podawanie temozolomidu przed radioterapią, w jej trakcie i po radioterapii u chorych na nowo rozpoznanego glejaka wielopostaciowego w istotny klinicznie i statystycznie sposób wydłuża przeżycie przy niewielkim zwiększeniu toksyczności leczenia.

Słowa kluczowe: guz mózgu, glejak wielopostaciowy, temozolomid, radioterapia.

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Temozolomide is an oral alkylating agent, a derivative of imidazotetrazine with a broad spectrum of antineoplastic activity. So far, TMZ has been shown to be efficacious in the treatment of patients with glioblastoma recurrence, in whom other therapies have failed [12]. Both theoretical and clinical presumptions suggest that the use of that drug in the early phase of treatment, when the vascularization of the tumour is not compromised, bioavailability is adequate, and chemo-resistance does not occur, might improve the efficacy of treatment. Therefore, the concomitant use of TMZ and radiotherapy may decrease the number of active clonogenic cells more efficiently than any of those methods alone. Synergic action of radiotherapy and TMZ was shown in experiments performed with human glioma cell cultures. It might be expected that the use of radiotherapy and TMZ may delay the recurrence and prolong the progression-free period.

Preliminary reports suggest that the use of TMZ (200 mg/m² of body-surface area daily for five days, each 28 days) before radiotherapy in 33 patients with malignant gliomas not suitable for surgery or partially resected led to a positive response to therapy in 17 patients (52%). A previous publication reported a positive response after the treatment in 30% of patients. Moreover, the chemotherapy applied directly after surgery might be more efficacious than the same treatment used in case of recurrence, because it acts on a smaller volume of the tumour.

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