

Gene may lead to early onset of brain tumor

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People with a particular gene variant may be more likely to develop brain tumors, and at an earlier age, than people without the gene, according to a study published in the January 27, 2009, print issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

The study involved 254 people with brain tumors and 238 people with no cancers. All those with tumors had glioblastoma multiforme, the most common type of brain cancer. People with this type of tumor survive an average of 12 to 15 months.

Through blood samples, researchers looked at the tumor suppressor TP53 gene. This gene acts as a tumor suppressor and is involved in preventing cancer.

People younger than 45 with brain tumors were more likely to have the Pro/Pro variant of the gene than older people with brain tumors or the healthy participants. A total of 20.6 percent of the young people with brain tumors had the gene variant, compared to 6.4 percent of the older people with brain tumors and 5.9 percent of the healthy participants.

"Eventually we may be able to use this knowledge to help identify people who have a higher risk of developing brain tumors at an early age. However the risk of this population remains low, even multiplied by three or four as shown here, because these brain tumors (glioblastomas) are infrequent in young people," said study author Marc Sanson, MD, PhD, of the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM) in Paris, France.

Source: American Academy of Neurology

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