

Removing all visible cancer is key to treating aggressive brain tumors

September 15 2015



Study of almost 100 children also finds greater survival rate for girls than boys after surgery.

(HealthDay)—Surgery that removes all visible cancer significantly improves the chances of survival for children with aggressive brain tumors, especially girls.

That's the finding of a study that included almost 100 children treated for high-grade glioma [brain cancer](#) between 1988 and 2010. These rare brain tumors occur in fewer than one in 100,000 children and teens.

After two years, the overall survival rate was 45 percent; 25 percent had no cancer progression.

Surgery to remove all visible signs of cancer was successful in one-third

of the children. Their median survival was 3.4 years, compared with 1.6 years for those who did not have all visible cancer removed. Median means half of the children lived longer, half did not.

The [survival benefit](#) after successful surgery was much greater in girls, with median survival of 8.1 years. Boys had a median survival of 2.4 years.

The study is published in the September issue of the journal *Neurosurgery*.

Surgical removal of all visible cancer is already the standard of care, but this study reinforces its importance in improving survival, according to Dr. Jeffrey Greenfield and colleagues. Greenfield is an associate professor of neurological surgery at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City.

High-grade gliomas account for 8 percent to 12 percent of brain tumors in children, and about 30 percent of [brain tumors](#) in adults.

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [childhood brain tumors](#).

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Citation: Removing all visible cancer is key to treating aggressive brain tumors (2015, September 15) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-09-visible-cancer-key-aggressive-brain.html>

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