Retinoblastoma mortality up with eye-preserving radiotherapy

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(HealthDay)—Short-term survival of heritable retinoblastoma is high,

but long-term mortality remains a challenge, according to a study published online July 5 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

Petra Temming, M.D., from University Hospital Essen in Germany, and colleagues analyzed data from 633 German children treated at the national reference center for heritable retinoblastoma in order to identify the impact of eye-preserving therapy on long-term survival.

The researchers found that the five-year overall survival of children diagnosed in Germany with heritable retinoblastoma from 1940 to 2008 was 93.2 percent. Long-term mortality was increased in those with heritable disease versus those with nonheritable disease. Overall survival correlated with tumor staging, and 92 percent of patients were diagnosed with a favorable tumor stage. While five-year overall survival in patients with stage 0 or 1 was 97.4 percent, only 79.5 percent of these patients survived 40 years after diagnosis. In children treated with eye-preserving radiotherapy, long-term overall survival was reduced versus those treated with enucleation alone. Adding chemotherapy aggravated this effect.

"The benefits of preserving vision must be balanced with the impact of eye-preserving treatments on long-term survival in heritable retinoblastoma, and the genetic background of the patient influences choice of eye-preserving treatment," conclude the authors.
Three authors disclosed financial ties to pharmaceutical companies.

More information: Abstract
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