SDGKC: For Pituitary Tumors, Gamma Knife™ Radiosurgery Offers Better Tumor Control

For many patients with pituitary tumors, initial surgical intervention is followed quickly by Gamma Knife™ radiosurgery. The benefits of using this radiosurgical intervention are many, and can offer better tumor control and a more positive long-term prognosis compared to surgery alone.

San Diego, CA (PRWEB) July 03, 2017 -- Worldwide, up to 20% of all brain tumors—those confined within the skull—are identified as pituitary adenomas.(1) Each year, almost 10,000 new pituitary tumors are diagnosed in the United States alone, with the vast majority of these tumors being pituitary adenomas. As efforts to improve treatment for patients with pituitary tumors continue, researchers are discovering just how powerful treatment with Gamma Knife™ radiosurgery can be, at facilities like the San Diego Gamma Knife Center® (SDGKC).

Recent studies have shown compelling results for patients who received treatment with Gamma Knife™ radiosurgery following traditional surgery for pituitary tumor removal. Overall, tumor control was achieved with Gamma Knife™ treatment in up to 94% of patients studied.(1) For up to 85% of these patients, tumor control was still achieved 10 years after treatment with the Gamma Knife™.(6)

Pituitary adenomas are typically benign, but they can still cause significant problems for patients due to their location in the brain.(3) Many of these tumors also secrete certain hormones, which can ultimately change the way patients’ bodies function.(3) In most cases, the first line of defense in dealing with pituitary tumors involves surgical removal of as much of the tumor as possible; however, residual tumor tissue can exist in the brain after this process.(4)

Even though many physicians choose surgery as an initial treatment, Gamma Knife™ radiosurgery can be either a primary or secondary choice for the management of pituitary tumors. Most often, Gamma Knife is used as a secondary treatment following surgery.(5) A growing number of studies show that treating patients with the Gamma Knife™ after surgical removal of pituitary tumors is extremely beneficial for patients and can dramatically improve their long-term tumor control results.

Dr. Kenneth Ott, neurosurgeon of SDGKC®, said, “The extreme accuracy of Gamma Knife radiosurgery allows effective treatment of residual pituitary tumors following surgery to remove much of the tumor volume. In my practice, residual tumors which I have operated on are treated with Gamma Knife radiosurgery which almost always stops further growth.”

Dr. Ott continued to explain that Gamma Knife radiosurgery is more effective than prior external beam methods of radiation and avoids complications to near-by sensitive structures. Tumors within a few millimeters of the optic nerves can be safely treated because of the frame-based fixation and software advantages of Gamma Knife. Tumors which are slowly growing can also be effectively treated without the need for surgery, as long as there is no visual loss from tumor compression of the optic nerves.

Patient outcomes can also be influenced by how soon after brain surgery they receive treatment with the Gamma Knife™. In many cases, patients benefit the most from early intervention with radiosurgery; some studies have suggested that patients who receive Gamma Knife treatment more than six months after their...
initial surgery are at a significantly greater risk of pituitary tumor progression nearly six years post-surgery. (7)

“Pituitary tumors, in general should be treated before the tumor compresses the overlying optic nerves,” said Dr. Ott. “The earlier the treatment begins, the better. The final decision regarding Gamma Knife should be made on a case-by-case basis by a surgeon who is experienced in surgery and radiosurgery.”

About San Diego Gamma Knife Center:
Since its opening, the San Diego Gamma Knife Center® has treated over 4,000 patients with various brain disorders from around the world. The facility is equipped to provide advanced radiosurgical treatment for a variety of conditions, including metastatic brain tumors, primary brain tumors, arteriovenous malformations, and functional disorders such as trigeminal neuralgia and cluster headaches.

On the campus of Scripps Memorial Hospital, the Center offers the use of its facilities to some of the top neurosurgeons and radiation oncologists in Southern California. It’s also a proud partner of the Neurosciences Department of Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla, helping to provide accurate diagnoses, treatment and support for a range of neurological conditions and disorders. To learn more about the San Diego Gamma Knife Center®, please visit http://www.sdgkc.com.

Sources:
Contact Information
Karla Jo
JoTo PR
http://www.jotopr.com
+1 888-202-4614 Ext: 802

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