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MALIGNANT BRAIN TUMOR PATIENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS FOOD AND ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT

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Background : To gain an understanding of the degree to which malignant brain tumor patients choose to turn to alternative treatment and abstain from certain food, and to find out what factors play a role in this preference.

Methods : The study was carried out from November 1 1997 to July 15 1999. One hundred and twenty-six patients were enrolled in the study, being malignant brain tumor patients undergoing radiotherapy. Admission was based on a questionnaire that had to be filled in by the malignant brain tumor patients. This questionnaire had to be filled in twice, the first time in the first week after starting radiotherapy and the second time within 6 months after completion of the treatment.

Results : Seventy-nine patients thought that nutrition would accelerate tumor growth, and 108 patients believed that cancer would not be contracted through the sharing of food. Ninety-seven patients chose to abstain from certain food after being diagnosed with cancer. Generally more than one type of food was abstained from.

Conclusion : The patient's confidence in the treatment affected his inclination to turn to alternative treatment during radiotherapy. If alternative treatment was effective, the patients tended to recommend it to other patients.

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Key words: Brain tumor, Alternative treatment, Attitude towards food