Assessment of care of patients with pituitary adenoma at The Ottawa Hospital

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Introduction: Pituitary adenomas are a diverse group of tumors associated with increased morbidity and mortality mainly attributable to hormonal hypersecretion, hormonal hyposecretion and tissue compression. Pituitary adenomas are common, having an estimated 16.7% prevalence in the general population. Over 100 patients present to The Ottawa Hospital for evaluation and treatment of pituitary adenomas each year. Among them, approximately 30 will undergo pituitary surgery. Despite the existence of guidelines in the literature for management of pituitary adenomas, there is a large degree of heterogeneity in how patients with pituitary disease are cared for.

Objective: The goal of this study was to assess the current status of how patients with pituitary disease are cared for at The Ottawa Hospital. It serves as the foundation for a larger quality improvement initiative to standardize and streamline the care of these patients at our institution.

Methods: A retrospective chart review was conducted on all patients presenting to The Ottawa Hospital with a newly identified pituitary lesion during a one year time period (March 2012 – February 2013). Detailed data were collected regarding the referral process, imaging, biochemical work-up, management and follow-up. For patients who underwent pituitary surgery, peri-operative management, complication, length of stay and residual disease data were collected. In addition, a survey of other Canadian centres was conducted to assess and compare the care of patients with pituitary disease across the country.

Results: Thirty-four patients were identified who met the study criteria – 18 underwent surgical resection and 16 were treated medically. This environmental scan confirmed that inconsistencies and inefficiencies exist in how this patient population is managed (repeat imaging, incomplete biochemical work-up at presentation). The survey of other major Canadian centres revealed consensus that standardized protocols should be implemented for care of patients with pituitary tumours.

Conclusion: This project serves as a foundation for creating standardized protocols for triage, evaluation and management of pituitary patients at The Ottawa Hospital with the goal of improving patient care and satisfaction.