

Treatment-resistant depression may be due to brain tumors

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Psychiatric symptoms such as depression, hallucinations, anxiety disorders and anorexia nervosa , even without neurological signs, can mask a brain tumor, conclude French doctors who treated a patient who was thought to have treatment-resistant depression but who turned out to have a tumor in the brain. The patient, a 54-year-old woman, had suffered from depression for six months, but treatment with antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs was withdrawn after five months because they were found to be ineffective, according to an article

Symptoms included apathy, difficulties in making decisions and taking action, lack of energy, sleep disorders , and problems with concentration and attention. In addition, he had **suicidal thoughts** and admitted **lack of effectiveness in his work** and loss of interest in his usual leisure activities. Although he had no history of personal or family mental illness, he experienced several stressful events. The neurological examination was normal, but a brain CT and MRI revealed a giant meningioma in his left frontal lobe. This is an area known to play an **important role in the development of depression in patients with brain tumors.** The woman underwent emergency surgery and recovered, with her depressive symptoms disappearing.

Certain patients should undergo a brain scan to identify or exclude the possibility of a tumor, but it must be taken into account that "it seems unrealistic to prescribe brain MRIs in all patients with depressive syndrome" because this mental disorder is common, while Brain tumors are "very rare" in patients with depression. In general, these researchers recommend that appropriate testing should be performed if the patient presents with late onset of the depressive syndrome after 50 years of age, if a diagnosis of treatment-resistant depression is made, or if the patient is apathetic.

- Medical Diary
- Photo: Lloyd Morgan