Acute Radiation Somnolence

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Definition

Acute radiation somnolence is a relatively transient and benign effect of cranial irradiation. It is manifested as sleepiness occurring during irradiation used to treat brain tumors. Multiple variables are associated, including total dose, fraction size, time between fractions, treatment volume, and concurrent chemotherapy. It occurs in both children and adults and usually affects daily functioning during the course of treatment and is a less common acute side effect during radiotherapy than other complications that depend on the specific structures in the pathway of the target of the

radiation. Although it is self-limiting, and resolves with medication and with the termination of irradiation, symptoms can be upsetting to patients. Nursing intervention which focuses on preparation through counseling and education serves to alleviate distress. Acute radiation somnolence is usually treated with steroids.

Cross-References

- [Radiation Oncology](#)
- [Radiotherapy](#)

References and Readings

- Brady, L. W., Heilmann, H. P., Molls, M., & Schlegel, W. (2006). *New techniques in radiation oncology*. New York: Springer.
- Walker, A. J., Ruzevick, J., Malayeri, A. A., Rigamonti, D., Lim, M., Redmond, K. J., & Kleinberg, L. (2014). *Future Oncology*, 10(7), 1277–1297.