

# Frequency of Gross Total Resection in Intra-axial Brain Tumors with Help of Neuronavigation

MUHAMMAD IRSHAD, AAMIR DAWOOD, MUHAMMAD AAMIR

*Ali Manzoor*

*Department of Neurosurgery, Nishtar Medical University & Hospital, Multan, Pakistan*

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Neuronavigation has become a ubiquitous tool in the surgical management of brain tumors. Neuronavigation is most useful as an adjunct to other brain-mapping techniques such as awake mapping and electrocorticography in the resection of lesions within eloquent motor and language areas. Neuronavigation is also commonly used in skull base tumors, especially for planning an operative trajectory in regions containing vital neurovascular structures and may be used for cerebrovascular surgery. The current study was planned to determine the frequency of gross total resection in intra-axial brain tumors with the help of neuronavigation.

**Material and Methods:** This cross sectional study was carried out in the Department of Neurosurgery, Nishtar Medical College & Hospital, Multan, from September 2014 to March 2015. After approval from institutional ethical committee, seventy seven patients fulfilling the inclusion criteria were selected from the patient admitted in the Neurosurgical Department through the Out Patient Department and patients referred from other departments. After thorough counseling with the patient and his/her relatives, informed consent for procedure was taken.

**Results:** Total 78 patients were included in the study. Out of these 78 (100%), 41 (52.6%) were male and 37 (47.4%) were female. As concern to the outcome variable (gross total resection), out of 78 (100%), in 61 (78.2%) patients gross total resection was present. On cross tabulation it was further clarified that in male patients' gross total resection present in 32 patients and absent in 9 patients. Similarly in female patients gross total resection present in 29 patients and absent in 8 patients. *P* value was 0.747.

**Conclusion:** Conclusion of our study is that neuronavigation is a useful technique in for better gross total resection of intra axial brain tumors.

**Keywords:** Neuronavigation, MRI, Brain Tumors, gross total resection.

## INTRODUCTION

Neuronavigation has become a ubiquitous tool in the surgical management of brain tumors.<sup>1</sup> Neuronavigation provides intraoperative orientation to the surgeon and helps in planning a precise surgical approach to the targeted lesion and defines the surrounding neurovascular structures. There are many important applications of neuronavigation in the fields of functional, vascular and spinal neurosurgery. Neuronavigation is most useful as an adjunct to other brain-mapping techniques such as awake mapping and electrocorticography in the resection of lesions within elo-

quent motor and language areas. Neuronavigation is also commonly used in skull base tumors, especially for planning an operative trajectory in regions containing vital neurovascular structures and may be used for cerebrovascular surgery.<sup>2</sup>

The ability to pinpoint tumors and other non-neoplastic surgical targets was standardized and became increasingly precise as the stereotactic coordination system and headframe emerged through the work of Leksell and Spiegel.<sup>3,4</sup> The logistical challenges of frame-based stereotactic navigation were dramatically reduced as frameless navigation systems emerged. The

need for a reliable means of accessing deep brain lesions with high accuracy has been recognized within neurosurgery since the early 1900s. The earliest neuro-navigational systems relied on an arc-centered stereotactic frame system in which points of interest in the surgical field could be correlated with points in the imaging data set.<sup>5</sup>

The components of frameless stereotactic navigation systems include a computer-based image processing module, a reference frame and a pointer that is recognized by an optical or electromagnetic detector. The basic arrangement for frameless stereotactic navigation relies on the spatial registration of anatomic landmarks in the operative environment to identical landmarks in a 3D model based on a reconstruction of cross-sectional imaging studies. The spatial coordinates of anatomic landmarks that are established through the use of a tracking system that pairs an optical or electromagnetic detector with a complimentary probe. The most-widely used tracking systems utilize dual infrared cameras that track the position of a probe relative to a fixed reference frame. The main limitation of infrared-based systems is the need for maintaining a direct line of sight between the camera, the reference frame and the probe during navigation.<sup>6</sup>

Detailed clinical studies suggest that frameless stereotactic navigation can achieve positional accuracy comparable with that of frame-based stereotaxy. Electrode-based studies using pre- and post-operative MRI suggested that modern frameless methods for localization yield positional accuracy within 2–3 mm during surgery, which is equivalent to the accuracy of frame-based stereotaxy. The error inherent in frameless stereotactic navigation systems relates to the accuracy of probe tracking as well as the quality of preoperative images and the method of image-to-patient registration. Clinical factors that cause shift of the brain or a lesion, such as cerebrospinal fluid loss, cyst decompression and cerebral edema or sag, may also diminish navigational accuracy.<sup>7</sup>

Senft et al. reported a trial with 58 high-grade glioma patients undergoing neuronavigation and demonstrated radiographically complete resection (68%).<sup>8</sup> A larger study of 40 patients undergoing pituitary surgery with the guidance of intraoperative neuronavigation found a higher rate of gross total resection (82.5%).<sup>9</sup> Martin et al. showed complete resection of the tumor mass with the aid of neuronavigation in 18 patients (72%).<sup>10</sup>

The rationale behind carrying out current study was to determine the extent of resection in intra-axial

brain tumors with the help of neuronavigation at our centre. Many recent papers have reported that the degree of resection of gliomas correlates with both progression-free and overall survival. The current study will show the effectiveness of neuronavigation and if found efficient will be the treatment of first choice in all patients who are having intra-axial brain tumor.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was carried out in the Department of Neurosurgery, Nishtar Medical College & Hospital, Multan, Pakistan from September, 2014 to March, 2015 after approval of synopsis by Institutional Ethical Review Board.

Sample size of 78 patients is calculated with 95% confidence level, 10% margin of error and taking anticipated population proportion 72% for this cross sectional study.

### Inclusion Criteria

1. Age 12 years to 60 years.
2. Both sexes.
3. Intra-axial brain lesion diagnosed on Magnetic Resonance Imaging (lies within brain parenchyma).

### Exclusion Criteria

Extensively vascular lesion, intraventricular lesion and calcified lesions diagnosed on Computed Tomography and Magnetic Resonance Imaging.

### Data Collection Procedure

After approval from local ethical committee, patients fulfilling the inclusion criteria were selected from the patient admitted in the Neurosurgical Department through the Out Patient Department and patients referred from other departments.

After thorough counseling with the patient and his/her relatives, informed consent for procedure was taken. On especially designed proforma, demographic profile was recorded on specially designed proforma.

The procedure was comprised of four stages: image acquisition, registration, planning and intraoperative navigation. Image acquisition was done in the evening prior to the morning of resection and requires bony landmarks followed by MRI scan with 2mm slices from vertex to foramen magnum. These images were form a virtual cranium and were transferred to

the intra-operative computer. Registration was done once the patient is positioned in the operating room, and involves coordinating or co-registration of the virtual cranium derived from the preoperative imaging study, and the patient's actual cranium in three-dimensional space of the operating room. Once these steps were completed, the surgeon monitored the position of any point inside the brain in three-dimensions relative to the tumor or functional cortex with an accuracy of approximately 1-2mm. Whole procedure was carried out by the same consultant. Post operative MRI brain within 48 hours was done to see gross total resection and data was recorded on specially designed proforma.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

All the data were entered and analyzed using computer program SPSS-19. Frequencies were calculated for gender and gross total resection and stratification were undertaken on age, gender and gross total resection. Mean and standard deviation were presented for age. Chi-Square test was applied. P < 0.05 were taken as significant.

**RESULTS**

Total 78 patients were included in the study. Out of these 78 (100%), 41 (52.6%) were male and 37 (47.4%) were female (Table 1). Considering the age of

**Table 1: Frequency of Gender.**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	41	52.6
Female	37	47.4
Total	78	100.0

patients, mean age of male patients was 33.12 ± 13.5. Similarly in female patients mean age was 32.5 ± 11.9 (Table 2). Regarding the outcome variable (gross total resection), out of 78 (100%), in 61 (78.2%) patients gross total resection was present and gross total resection was absent in 17 (21.8%) patients (Table 3). On cross tabulation, it was further clarified that in male patients' gross total resection present in 32 patients and absent in 9 patients. Similarly in female patients gross total resection present in 29 patients and absent in 8 patients. P value was non significant (Table 4 & 5).

**Table 2: Mean Age of the Patients.**

Age		
Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	33.12	13.513
Female	32.54	11.957
Total	32.85	12.720

**Table 3: Frequency of Gross Total Resection.**

Gross Total Resection	Frequency	Percent
Yes	61	78.2
No	17	21.8
Total	78	100.0

**Table 4: Comparison of Gender and Gross Total Resection.**

Gender	Gross Total Resection		Total	P value
	Yes	No		
Male	32	9	41	1.00
Female	29	8	37	
Total	61	17	78	

**Table 5: Comparison of Age Groups and Gross Total Resection.**

Age Groups	Gross Total Resection		Total	P value
	Yes	No		
13-30 years	24	5	29	0.747
31-45 years	19	6	25	
46-60 years	18	6	24	
Total	61	17	78	

**DISCUSSION**

In the beginning, cranial neuronavigation was used for a better anatomical orientation. As neuronavigation bases on preoperative images, inaccuracies, commonly summarized as brain shift, may occur due to CSF loss and deformation of the brain anatomy by self-retaining retractors and tumor reduction. Brain shift can be

minimized using appropriate surgical techniques described and refined by Kelly *et al.*<sup>11</sup> Although this problem is overestimated in our opinion, other real time imaging techniques are brain shift independent. Therefore intraoperative sonography, open MRI or mobile CT have the advantage over neuronavigation in this aspect.

In present study, as concern to the outcome variable (gross total resection), out of 78 (100%), in 61 (78. %) patients gross total resection was present and gross total resection was absent in 17 (21.8%) patients. Nevertheless, these techniques do not solve two major problems of contemporary neurosurgery. First, they only offer anatomical information. For a functional preservation, intraoperative monitoring still is mandatory. To date, only motorcortex and speech area can be monitored by conventional cortical stimulation or SSEP's. Second, especially in low grade or recurrent gliomas, MRI or CT often are not capable to distinguish between tumor and edema, respectively gliosis. fMRI, MEG and PET may be the solution of these problems. As these techniques are available only preoperatively, they have to be integrated into cranial neuronavigation. Otherwise, their information cannot be used reliably and comfortably during surgery.

Meanwhile functional MRI is not only able to show the Brodmann areas 4, 44 and 45, but also many other functional brain areas like short-term memory<sup>12</sup> or visual fields. With constantly improved paradigms, other complex cortical functions might be visualized in future. Especially the combination of different paradigms helps to detect and localize specific intellectual functions (K. Friston, London: Workshop Functional Imaging, Aachen, Germany 10/12/99). These areas cannot be monitored neither by electrophysiological, nor by intraoperative imaging techniques. Prior to the integration and monitoring of these complex cortical functions, it has to be proven, that fMRI indeed shows, what it intends to do. As fMRI bases on minimal differences in blood flow levels, its results might be interfered by many pathophysiological conditions.

The BOLD effect diminishes, if arterial pCO<sub>2</sub> increases, or if the parent vessel is stenotic. As T2\* images are very sensitive for blood vessel, contralateral and postcentral co-activations may occur. Although it seems to be highly probable, that the motorcortex can be localized by fMRI, still no evidence exists. Recently two study groups in Aachen<sup>13,14</sup> and Zürich<sup>15</sup> reported their experiences of the correspondence bet-

ween fMRI and cortical stimulation. Like in our present initial experiment, both groups matched their findings indirectly by comparing anatomical landmarks. Granslandt *et al.*<sup>16,17</sup> were the first to publish their experiences with a direct integration of functional images into cranial neuronavigation. They could show that the motorcortex localization of MEG (magnetic encephalography) and cortical SSEP corresponded well in all their 50 patients. The present study is the first report of direct integration of fMRI into neuronavigation. Although it includes only a few patients yet, fMRI seems to be highly reliable for the localization of the motorcortex and probably the Broca area as well. As mentioned above in low grade or recurrent gliomas, conventional imaging techniques like MRI or CT often are unable to distinguish between tumor and edema, respectively gliosis. The rapid progress of PET imaging during the last years seems to solve this problem. Primarily 18 – FDG PET was used for this purpose.<sup>18-20</sup>

Recently amino acids like 11C-methionine or methyl-11-C-Thymidine were increasingly used with promising results.<sup>21-23</sup> Especially the amino acid studies show, that PET seems to be superior to other imaging techniques to distinguish between tumoral and non-tumoral lesions. But comparable to fMRI studies, only one article is published sofar, which aimed to prove these results intraoperatively. Levivier *et al.* used 18-FDG PET information to target their stereotactic biopsy in patients with suspected intracranial tumoral lesion. They could show, that 6/35 (17%) biopsies based on CT only were nondiagnostic. In contrast, all 55 biopsies defined on FDG-PET could be used.

## CONCLUSION

Conclusion of current study is that neuroneavigation is a useful technique for better gross total resection of intra axial brain tumors.

## Author's Contribution

All the authors were involved in the conception, design, performing experiments, analysis, and interpretation of data and the writing of this article.

## Conflict of Interest

None of the researcher has conflict of interest in the products used.

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*Address for Correspondence:*

*Muhammad Irshad*

*Senior Registrar*

*Department of Neurosurgery, Nishtar Medical*

*University & Hospital, Multan, Pakistan*

*Email: ilr\_dr@yahoo.com*

*Mobile: 0092 334 612 9717*

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**AUTHORS DATA**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Post</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Role of Authors</b>
Dr. Muhammad Irshad	Senior Registrar	Department of Neurosurgery, Nishtar Medical University & Hospital, Multan, Pakistan	ilr_dr@yahoo.com	Data Collection
Dr. Aamir Dawood	Assistant Professor			Paper Writing
Dr. Muhammad Aamir	Medical Officer			Review of Literature
Dr. Ali Manzoor	Medical Officer			Tables and Proof Reading

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