

Genomic and Transcriptomic Tumor Heterogeneity in Bilateral Retinoblastoma

Ursula Winter, BSc, PhD; Daiana Ganiewich, BEng; Daniela Ottaviani, PhD; Santiago Zugbi, BSc; Rosario Aschero, BSc; Juan Martin Sendoya, BSc; Eduardo G. Cafferata, PhD; Marcela Mena, PhD; Mariana Sgroi, MD; Claudia Sampor, MD; Fabiana Lubieniecki, MD; Adriana Fandiño, MD; Martin C. Abba, PhD; François Doz, MD, MSc; Osvaldo Podhjaccer, PhD; Angel Montero Carcaboso, PhD; Eric Letouzé, PhD; François Radvanyi, PhD; Guillermo L. Chantada, MD, PhD; Andrea S. Llera, PhD; Paula Schaiquevich, PhD

 Supplemental content

IMPORTANCE Comprehensive understanding of the genomic and gene-expression differences between retinoblastoma tumors from patients with bilateral disease may help to characterize risk and optimize treatment according to individual tumor characteristics.

OBJECTIVE To compare the genomic features between each eye and a specimen from an orbital relapse in patients with bilateral retinoblastoma.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS In this case, 2 patients with retinoblastoma underwent upfront bilateral enucleation. Tumor samples were subjected to genomic and gene-expression analysis. Primary cell cultures were established from both of the tumors of 1 patient and were used for gene-expression studies.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND MEASURES Whole-exome sequencing was performed on an Illumina platform for fresh tumor samples and DNA arrays (CytoScan or OncoScan) were used for paraffin-embedded samples and cell lines. Gene-expression analysis was performed using Agilent microarrays. Germinal and somatic alterations, copy number alterations, and differential gene expression were assessed.

RESULTS After initial bilateral enucleation, patient 1 showed massive choroidal and laminar optic nerve infiltration, while patient 2 showed choroidal and laminar optic nerve invasion. Patient 1 developed left-eye orbital recurrence and bone marrow metastasis less than 1 year after enucleation. Both ocular tumors showed gains on 1q and 6p but presented other distinct genomic alterations, including an additional gain in 2p harboring the N-myc proto-oncogene (*MYCN*) in the left tumor and orbital recurrence. Similar copy number alterations between the orbital recurrence and the left eye supported the origin of the relapse, with an additional 11q loss only detected in the orbital relapse. Specimens from patient 2 showed common copy number gains and losses, but further evolution rendered a 2p gain spanning *MYCN* in the left tumor. For this patient, microarray expression analysis showed differential expression of the *MYCN* and the forkhead box protein G1 (*FOXG1*) gene pathways between the left and right tumors.

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE Differential genomic and gene expression features were observed between tumors in 2 patients with bilateral disease, confirming intereye heterogeneity that might be considered if targeted therapies are used in such patients. Chromosomal alteration profile supported the origin of the orbital recurrence from the homolateral eye in 1 patient. Loss in chromosome 11q may have been associated with extraocular relapse in this patient.

JAMA Ophthalmol. doi:10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2020.0427
Published online March 19, 2020.

Author Affiliations: Author affiliations are listed at the end of this article.

Corresponding Author: Paula Schaiquevich, PhD, Precision Medicine, Hospital de Pediatría J.P. Garrahan, Combate de los Pozos 1881, C1245AAL, Buenos Aires, Argentina (paula.schaiquevich@gmail.com).

Bilateral retinoblastoma usually presents with asymmetric tumors, with 1 eye showing more advanced disease than the fellow eye, suggesting that despite having a common germinal *RBI* mutation, other factors may play a role in tumor genesis and progression.^{1,2} If the tumor is not diagnosed timely, it may progress in both eyes to advanced disease requiring bilateral enucleation. Upfront bilateral enucleation is seldom performed in high-income countries; thus, when performed, it gives the opportunity of evaluating genomic and gene expression differences that might be present between eyes without the effect of any therapy that could cause clonal selection.^{3,4} Herein, we analyzed the genomic and gene expression features between tumors in 2 cases of initially enucleated bilateral retinoblastoma.

Methods

The study was approved by Hospital de Pediatría J.P. Garrahan institutional review board. Written informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians of patients, and all procedures involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards and the Declaration of Helsinki. No compensation or incentive was provided to participants of the study.

Patients

Patient 1 and patient 2 had bilateral Group E retinoblastoma (Figure 1) with no evidence of extraocular extension. Patient 1 underwent upfront bilateral enucleation. Histopathological assessments of both eyes showed massive choroidal invasion and laminar optic nerve involvement. The patient did not receive adjuvant therapy, and after less than a year, a left-orbital and bone marrow relapse occurred. The patient was treated with systemic chemotherapy and died of disease progression.

In patient 2, histopathological evaluations showed the right eye with massive choroidal, intrascleral, and postlaminar optic nerve involvement, while the left eye had focal choroidal and prelaminar optic nerve tumor extension. The patient received adjuvant chemotherapy⁵ and remains alive and disease free.

Genomic Studies and Gene Expression Analysis

Genome studies for copy number alterations (CNA) and loss-of-heterozygosity analysis were performed with OncoScan CNV Assay (Thermo Fisher) or SureSelect Clinical Research Exome version 2 (Agilent Technologies), followed by sequencing on an Illumina HiSeq 4000 instrument (Illumina Inc), depending on the availability of fresh or formalin-fixed, paraffin-embedded samples. The analysis of CNAs and somatic and germline variants was performed as described in the eMethods in the Supplement. Two-color, microarray-based gene-expression analysis was performed according to manufacturer's recommendations (eMethods in the Supplement). Data were collected from August 2016 to October 2017.

Patient-Derived Cell Cultures

Low-passage retinoblastoma cell cultures were obtained from fresh samples⁶ from both eyes of patient 2 and named HPG-RBT-12L and HPG-RBT-12R. A CytoScan HD Assay (Thermo

Key Points

Question Do both ocular tumors of patients with bilateral retinoblastoma show similar genomic and gene expression features?

Findings In this case report, 2 patients with bilateral retinoblastoma showed eye tumors with distinctive genomic profiles; chromosomal alteration profile supported the origin of the orbital recurrence from the homolateral eye in 1 patient, and in this case, 11q loss may be associated with extraocular relapse. Transcription factor pathways were differentially expressed between the left-eye and right-eye tumors in the second patient.

Meaning These 2 cases suggest genomic and gene expression differences between tumors in patients with bilateral disease and confirm intereye tumor heterogeneity that might be considered with targeted therapies.

Fisher) was used for CNA analysis of both cell cultures and compared with the genomic profiles of the matched tumors for qualitative similarities in the presence or absence of segment gains and losses (eMethods in the Supplement).

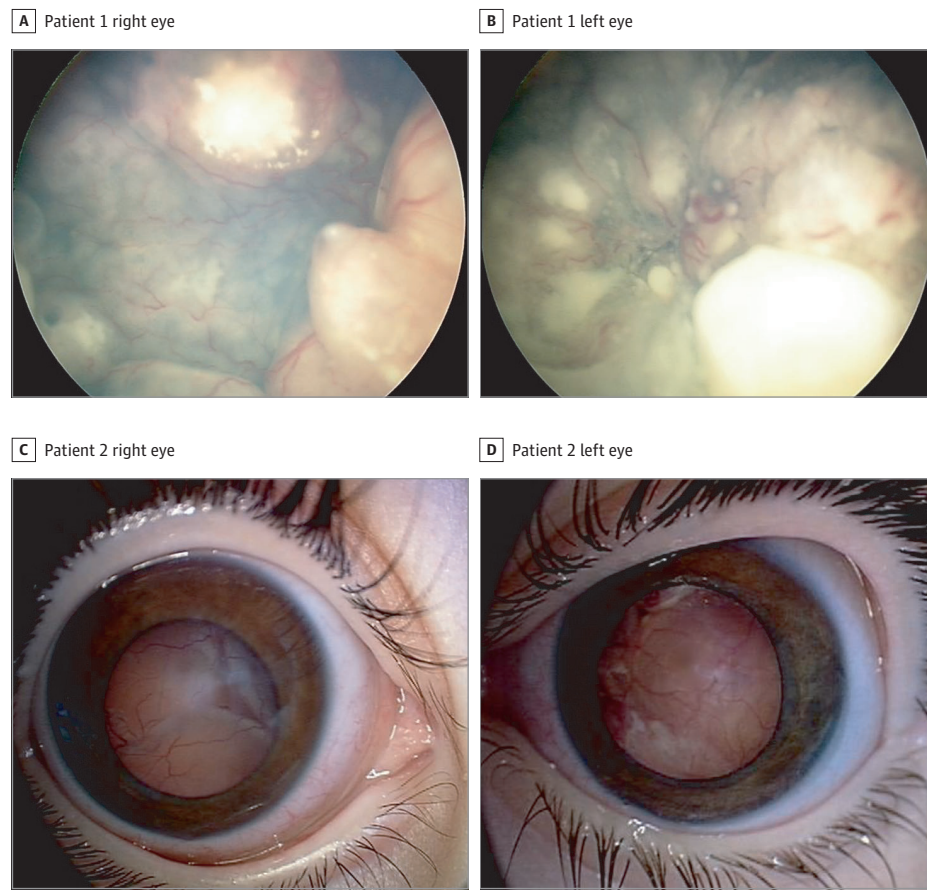
Data Analysis

Data were analyzed from November 2017 to January 2019. A detailed description is in the eMethods in the Supplement. Briefly, genomic variant analysis from whole exome sequencing was performed by IntegraGen according to their pipeline (<http://www.integragen-genomics.com/bioinformatics-and-bioanalysis>) and manual review was done with Alamut Visual version 2.10 (Interactive Biosoftware). Copy number alterations were evaluated by reprocessing sequencing files with the Burrows-Wheeler Aligner for alignment, Sambamba for duplicates removal, and the Genome Alteration Print method for ploidy and copy number profiles. The CNA analysis for DNA array files was performed with Chromosome Analysis Software (Thermo Fisher). Final processing in both cases was done in R/Bioconductor version 3.5 (R Project for Statistical Computing). Expression data analysis was performed in R/Bioconductor version 3.5 (R Project for Statistical Computing), the InnateDB database, Pathway Recognition Algorithm using Data Integration on Genomic Models (PARADIGM), and MultiExperiment Viewer software MeV version 4.9 (MEV). Significance for differentially expressed genes was set at $P < .001$ and fold change at 2 or greater.

Results

Genomic differences between eyes were present in patient 1, while the orbital relapse resembled the homolateral eye. Patient 1 showed a previously reported germline heterozygous deletion of the retinoblastoma protein (*RBI*) gene (Leiden Open Variation Database; RB1_00509). A CNA analysis showed that only gains at chromosomes 1q and 6p were present in both ocular tumors, despite differences in the absolute copy numbers. Chromosome 13q showed a normal copy number in the right tumor, while in the left tumor it was in loss of heterozygosity,

Figure 1. Images at Presentation



A and B, Patient 1's right and left eyes at presentation. C and D, Clinical presentation of the right and left eyes of patient 2.

with a concomitant gain of the mutated allele. The second hit could not be identified for the right-eye tumor. Additionally, a gain in 20q and a deletion of chromosome 16 were present exclusively in the right eye, while the left tumor showed additional gains in 2p (harboring the N-myc proto-oncogene [*MYCN*]), 15q, and 22q11.1, and a loss in 9p21 (Figure 2A and B; eTable 1 in the Supplement). Tumor from the left orbital recurrence showed CNAs that closely resembled those found in the left intraocular tumor but showed an additional 11q loss and difference in the absolute copy number of 6p (Figure 2C).

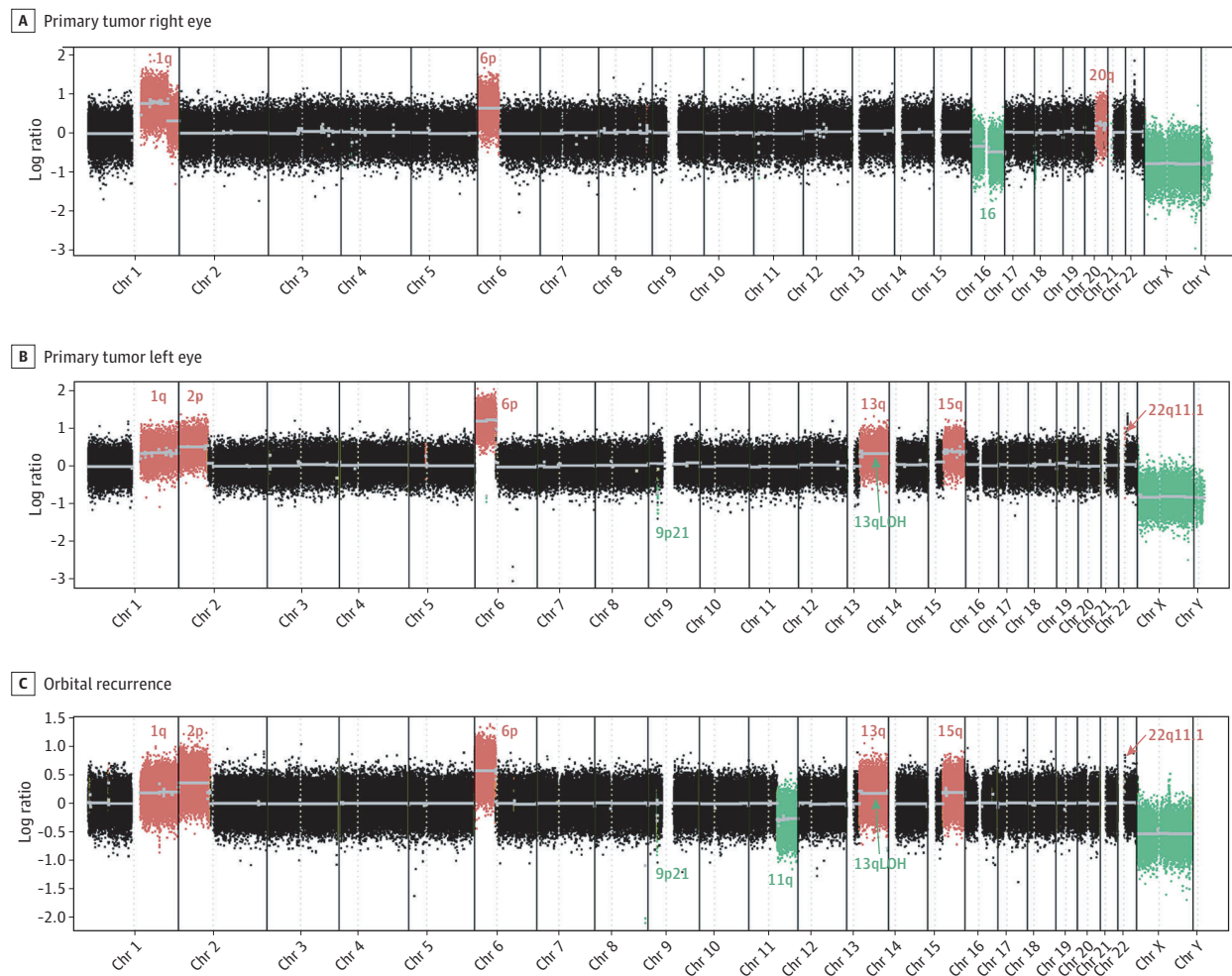
The ocular tumors of patient 2 also showed genomic differences. For patient 2, a germline and heterozygous mutation in *RBI* c.1421G>T (p.(Ser474Ile)) was detected. Among the somatic alterations (eTable 2 in the Supplement), a pathogenic mutation in the *BCL6* corepressor (*BCOR*) gene in an allele frequency of 6% was identified only in the left tumor (ClinVar; RCVO0538294.1).

Both intraocular tumors showed similar CNA profiles sharing gains in 1q, 6p, and 14q11.2, a 13q loss that includes *RBI* in loss of heterozygosity (considered the second hit), and a subclonal loss at 8p23 (Figure 3A and B). Differences included a focal clonal gain of *MYCN* as part of a subclonal gain in 2p, exclusively found in the left tumor, and the allelic ratio in 6p gain. Deletions in 13q showed different boundaries between eyes, and the telomeric end of the right tumor was in copy-neutral loss of heterozygosity.

Altogether, in addition to *RBI* alterations, proposed by Alfred G. Knudson, Jr, MD,² and required for retinoblastoma initiation, additional genetic changes are summarized in eTable 3 in the Supplement, and a hypothesis for tumor evolution in both patients is depicted in eFigure 1 in the Supplement.

Primary cell cultures derived from patient 2 resembled the genetic features of the matched-ocular tumors. Similar CNAs to the ocular tumors were detected for the matched-cell models (Figure 3C and D; eTable 4 in the Supplement). Observed differences may correspond to changes in clonality (ie, a subclonal gain of 2p only in the left tumor that became clonal in HPG-RBT-12L cells). Unsupervised hierarchical clustering of the whole-gene expression data set showed that cell lines grouped together with their corresponding tumor of origin (eFigure 2 in the Supplement). The comparisons of right vs left tumors and HPG-RBT-12R cells vs HPG-RBT-12L cells showed 997 and 1186 differentially expressed genes (DEGs; $P < .001$; eFigure 2 in the Supplement) while tumor vs matching cell line comparison resulted in almost no DEGs (eFigure 2 in the Supplement). Gene ontology enrichment analysis performed with the common DEGs upregulated in the left tumor and HPG-RBT-12L cells (eFigure 2 in the Supplement) rendered the term *DNA-binding transcription factors* to indicate the most significantly enriched element. Specifically, *MYCN* was significantly upregulated in both specimens. A hierarchical clus-

Figure 2. Chromosomal Copy Number Alterations of Patient 1



A, Right-eye tumor. B, Left-eye tumor. C, Orbital recurrence. Each dot represents a log ratio of tumor signal compared with the normal reference. Losses and gains in chromosomal regions correspond with negative and

positive values, respectively. The y-axis depicts the log ratio, and chromosomal positions are represented in the x-axis (Chr indicates chromosome). The orbital recurrence shows a similar profile to the left eye, with an additional loss at 11q.

tering using genes from 2 previously reported *MYCN* gene signatures^{7,8} resulted in the correct segregation of the right and left tumors and cell lines (eFigure 3 in the Supplement).

The *FOXG1* gene was the most pronounced DEG between the left-eye and right-eye tumors and the derived cell lines (eFigure 2 in the Supplement). A hierarchical clustering performed with a previously reported *FOXG1* gene signature revealed 2 distinct clusters of right vs left specimens (eFigure 3 in the Supplement).⁹ Both analyses suggested an influence of *MYCN* and *FOXG1* in the differential phenotype of the left tumor of patient 2.

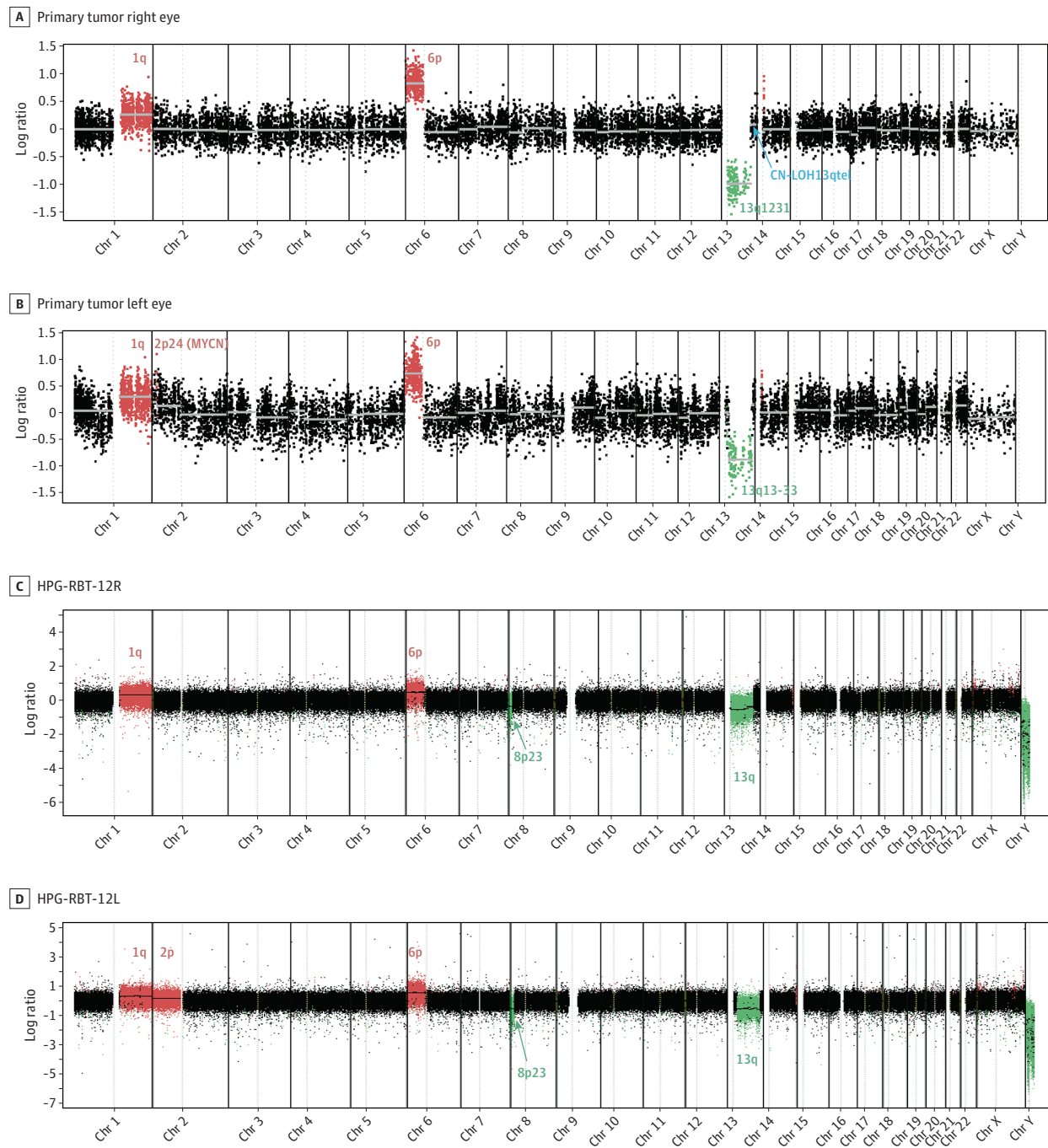
Discussion

Comparative tumor biology studies between eyes simultaneously enucleated at diagnosis in bilateral retinoblastoma have not been reported thus far. We found differences in genomic aberrations and gene-expression profiles, suggesting tumor heterogeneity in 2 patients with initial bilateral enucleation.

Intertumor heterogeneity, including gains in *MYCN*, may be determinants for the evolution of more aggressive tumors as shown in both patients studied. Also, intratumor heterogeneity is suspected by the finding that 6% of the left-eye tumor cells of patient 2 presented a mutation in *BCOR*.^{2,4}

Copy number alteration analysis indicated that the origin of the orbital relapse in patient 1 was the homolateral eye. A deletion in 11q was found in the orbital tissue, a known risk factor for neuroblastoma that has also been reported in few intraocular retinoblastomas but not associated with an increased risk of extraocular relapse.¹⁰⁻¹³ Moreover, patient 1 showed a *MYCN* gain in both the left eye and orbital relapse, but this was absent in the right eye. The *MYCN* gene is a known driver in solid pediatric tumors, and its amplification has been proposed as a driver of retinoblastoma in cases with wild-type *RBI*^{11,14}; however, *MYCN* gains have also been reported in 65% of initially enucleated eyes of patients who are *RB*^{-/-}, and its prognostic implications are not clear.¹¹

Figure 3. Copy Number Alterations in Samples From Patient 2



A, Right-eye tumors. B, Left-eye tumors. C and D, Matched primary cell lines. Similar chromosomal alterations were detected between eye tumors, except for a 2p gain encompassing the *MYCN* gene locus. The chromosomal profiles

of both HPG-RBT-12R (C) and HPG-RBT-12L (D) cells were similar to the matched original tumors, with no additional alterations. Chr indicates chromosome.

In addition to a differential gene expression profile of the *MYCN* pathway between eye tumors in patient 2, we also report an upregulated gene expression of *FOXG1* pathway in the absence of a copy number gain of this gene. The *FOXG1* gene is involved in telencephalon development, and it has been proposed to play a role in glioma

blastoma and medulloblastoma, despite no reports in retinoblastoma.^{9,15}

Limitations

The limitation of this series is its small sample size. Our findings cannot be generalized until they are confirmed in larger studies.

Conclusions

The present study shows intereye and intratumor heterogeneity in 2 patients with simultaneously enucleated bilateral retino-

blastoma and suggests each affected eye might be considered individually for potential targeted therapies based on specific genetic and differential gene expression features. In 1 patient, the orbital relapse showed an 11q loss absent in the homolateral eye that could be associated with extraocular relapse.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Accepted for Publication: February 3, 2020.

Published Online: March 19, 2020.

doi:10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2020.0427

Author Affiliations: Precision Medicine, Hospital de Pediatría J.P. Garrahan, Buenos Aires, Argentina (Winter, Ganiewich, Zugbi, Mena, Chantada, Schaiquevich); National Scientific and Technical Research Council, CONICET, Buenos Aires, Argentina (Winter, Zugbi, Aschero, Cafferata, Abba, Podhajcer, Chantada, Llera, Schaiquevich); Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Therapy, Instituto Leloir, Buenos Aires, Argentina (Ganiewich, Sendoya, Cafferata, Podhajcer, Llera); Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Unité Mixte de Recherche 144, Institut Curie, Paris, France (Ottaviani, Radvanyi); Pathology Service, Hospital de Pediatría J.P. Garrahan, Buenos Aires, Argentina (Aschero, Lubieniecki); Ophthalmology Service, Hospital de Pediatría J.P. Garrahan, Buenos Aires, Argentina (Sgroi, Fandiño); Oncology Service, Hospital de Pediatría J.P. Garrahan, Buenos Aires, Argentina (Sampor); Centro de Investigaciones Inmunológicas Básicas y Aplicadas, School of Medical Sciences, Universidad de La Plata, La Plata, Argentina (Abba); Soins, Innovation, Recherche, en Oncologie de l'Enfant, de l'Adolescent et de l'Adulte Jeune (SIREDO) Oncology Center, Institut Curie, Paris, France (Doz); Preclinical Therapeutics and Drug Delivery Research Program and Department of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology, Hospital Sant Joan de Deu, Barcelona, Spain (Montero Carcaboso); Centre de Recherche des Cordeliers, Sorbonne Universités, Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale, Paris, France (Letouzé); Functional Genomics of Solid Tumor, Labex Immuno-Oncology, Équipe Labellisée Ligue Contre le Cancer, Université de Paris, Université Paris 13, Paris, France (Letouzé).

Author Contributions: Drs Schaiquevich and Llera have full access to all the data in the study and take responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis.

Concept and design: Podhajcer, Montero Carcaboso, Chantada, Schaiquevich.

Acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data: Winter, Ganiewich, Ottaviani, Zugbi, Aschero, Sendoya, Cafferata, Mena, Sgroi, Sampor, Lubieniecki, Fandiño, Abba, Doz, Podhajcer, Letouzé, Radvanyi, Chantada, Llera, Schaiquevich.

Drafting of the manuscript: Ganiewich, Zugbi, Aschero, Sendoya, Sgroi, Chantada, Llera, Schaiquevich.

Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content: Winter, Ganiewich, Ottaviani, Cafferata, Mena, Sampor, Lubieniecki, Fandiño, Abba, Doz, Podhajcer, Montero Carcaboso, Letouzé, Radvanyi, Chantada, Llera, Schaiquevich.

Statistical analysis: Winter, Sendoya, Sampor, Abba, Letouzé, Schaiquevich.

Obtained funding: Podhajcer, Chantada, Schaiquevich.

Administrative, technical, or material support:

Winter, Ganiewich, Ottaviani, Zugbi, Aschero, Sendoya, Sgroi, Sampor, Lubieniecki, Fandiño, Schaiquevich.

Supervision: Ottaviani, Fandiño, Podhajcer, Chantada, Llera, Schaiquevich.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Dr Sendoya reported nonfinancial support from Fundación Instituto Leloir and personal fees from National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) during the conduct of the study. Dr Mena reported personal fees from Fundación Natali Dafne Flexer during the conduct of the study. Dr Doz reported personal fees from Bayer, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Celgene, Loxo Oncology, Roche, Servier, and Tesaro outside the submitted work. Dr Llera reported nonfinancial support from Amazon Web Services and grants from National Agency for Science and Technology Promotion (Argentina) during the conduct of the study. Dr Schaiquevich reported grants from National Institute of Cancer, Ministry of Health, Argentina; Fondation Nelia et Amadeo Barletta; National Agency for Science and Technology Promotion, Argentina; National Agency for Science and Technology Promotion, Argentina; Fund for Ophthalmic Knowledge; and Fundación Natali Dafne Flexer de Ayuda al Niño con Cancer, Argentina, during the conduct of the study. No other disclosures were reported.

Funding/Support: This work was funded by the National Institute of Cancer, Ministry of Health, Argentina; Fondation Nelia et Amadeo Barletta, National Agency for Science and Technology Promotion (grants PIDC 2014-0043 and FS-BIO 07/2017); Fund for Ophthalmic Knowledge; Fundación Natalie Dafne Flexer de Ayuda al Niño con Cancer (Drs Ganiewich and Mena). We also acknowledge the contribution of Amazon Web Services Cloud Credits for Research.

Role of the Funder/Sponsor: The funders had no role in the design and conduct of the study; collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of the data; preparation, review, or approval of the manuscript; and decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

Additional Contributions: The authors would like to acknowledge Irene Szijan, PhD, Cátedra de Genética, Facultad de Farmacia y Bioquímica, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina, for her analysis and interpretation of the mutations in *RB1*. She was not compensated for this contribution.

REFERENCES

1. Abramson DH, Notterman RB, Ellsworth RM, Kitchin FD. Retinoblastoma treated in infants in the first six months of life. *Arch Ophthalmol*. 1983;101(9):1362-1366. doi:10.1001/archoph.1983.01040020364004
2. Thériault BL, Dimaras H, Gallie BL, Corson TW. The genomic landscape of retinoblastoma: a review. *Clin Exp Ophthalmol*. 2014;42(1):33-52. doi:10.1111/ceo.12132

3. Kapatai G, Brundler M-A, Jenkinson H, et al. Gene expression profiling identifies different sub-types of retinoblastoma. *Br J Cancer*. 2013;109(2):512-525. doi:10.1038/bjc.2013.283
4. Kooi IE, Mol BM, Massink MPG, et al. Somatic genomic alterations in retinoblastoma beyond *RB1* are rare and limited to copy number changes. *Sci Rep*. 2016;6(1):25264. doi:10.1038/srep25264
5. Pérez V, Sampor C, Rey G, et al. Treatment of nonmetastatic unilateral retinoblastoma in children. *JAMA Ophthalmol*. 2018;136(7):747-752. doi:10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2018.1501
6. Winter U, Aschero R, Fuentes F, et al. Tridimensional retinoblastoma cultures as vitreous seeds models for live-cell imaging of chemotherapy penetration. *Int J Mol Sci*. 2019;20(5):1077. doi:10.3390/ijms20051077
7. Valentijn LJ, Koster J, Haneveld F, et al. Functional *MYCN* signature predicts outcome of neuroblastoma irrespective of *MYCN* amplification. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2012;109(47):19190-19195. doi:10.1073/pnas.1208215109
8. Jung M, Russell AJ, Liu B, et al. A Myc activity signature predicts poor clinical outcomes in Myc-associated cancers. *Cancer Res*. 2017;77(4):971-981. doi:10.1158/0008-5472.CAN-15-2906
9. Dali R, Verginelli F, Pramatarova A, Sladek R, Stifani S. Characterization of a *FOXG1:TLE1* transcriptional network in glioblastoma-initiating cells. *Mol Oncol*. 2018;12(6):775-787. doi:10.1002/1878-0261.12168
10. Sampieri K, Amenduni M, Papa FT, et al. Array comparative genomic hybridization in retinoma and retinoblastoma tissues. *Cancer Sci*. 2009;100(3):465-471. doi:10.1111/j.1349-7006.2008.01070.x
11. Rushlow DE, Mol BM, Kennett JY, et al. Characterisation of retinoblastomas without *RB1* mutations: genomic, gene expression, and clinical studies. *Lancet Oncol*. 2013;14(4):327-334. doi:10.1016/S1470-2045(13)70045-7
12. Juan Ribelles A, Barberá S, Yáñez Y, et al. Clinical features of neuroblastoma with 11q deletion: an increase in relapse probabilities in localized and 4S stages. *Sci Rep*. 2019;9(1):13806. doi:10.1038/s41598-019-50327-5
13. Mlakar V, Jurkovic Mlakar S, Lopez G, Maris JM, Ansari M, Gummy-Pause F. 11q deletion in neuroblastoma: a review of biological and clinical implications. *Mol Cancer*. 2017;16(1):114. doi:10.1186/s12943-017-0686-8
14. Gröbner SN, Worst BC, Weischenfeldt J, et al; ICGC PedBrain-Seq Project; ICGC MML-Seq Project. The landscape of genomic alterations across childhood cancers. *Nature*. 2018;555(7696):321-327. doi:10.1038/nature25480
15. Manoranjan B, Wang X, Hallett RM, et al. *FoxG1* interacts with *Bmi1* to regulate self-renewal and tumorigenicity of medulloblastoma stem cells. *Stem Cells*. 2013;31(7):1266-1277. doi:10.1002/stem.1401