

Abstract

Background

In industrialized nations a curative therapy of retinoblastoma can be achieved in a large number of patients due to timely diagnosis and therapy. In developing countries the survival rates are much lower and very little data have been published especially from Africa.

Objectives

This study was performed to investigate the survival and prognostic factors of retinoblastoma patients admitted to Kenyatta National Hospital, the national referral hospital in Kenya.

Material and methods

In this study all records of patients admitted with retinoblastoma from January 2000 to December 2004 were reviewed. Demographic data, clinical presentation, intraoperative findings and histology reports were recorded and the patients or their relatives were contacted during follow-up to investigate the outcome and survival.

Results

Files of 160 patients (86 males and 74 females) were retrieved for this study. Data on 3-year survival could be acquired from 105 patients and the cumulative 3-year survival rate was 26.6 %. Factors significantly influencing survival were age at presentation less than 12 months, early disease at presentation (leukocoria only), no extraocular growth and total delay of management ≥ 5 months. Proptosis and tumor recurrence were associated with a 3-year mortality of 100 %.

Conclusion

The main reasons for poor outcome were late presentation and recurrent disease after initial treatment elsewhere, extraocular growth and delay between initial presentation and treatment. Awareness of the public and of healthcare workers should be increased in order to reduce the time delay until diagnosis and treatment.