

Liver

Hepatoblastoma

Definition

This is a sarcoma that arises in the liver

Etiology

Although the cause is unknown, there is an increased incidence in families with familial adenomatous polyposis coli (APC)

Signs and Symptoms

Enlarged liver

Diagnostic Evaluation

- Blood tests - These tumours secrete the tumour marker alpha fetoprotein.
- Ultrasound and CT of the liver
- Chest x-ray and CT lungs +/-brain

Staging

This is based on the anatomical extent within the liver and relates to the ability to remove the tumour surgically. A post operative surgical staging system is also used.

Histology

- Pure Fetal Histology (good prognosis)
- Embryonal type, mixed epithelial, mesenchymal, anaplastic.

Treatment

- Chemotherapy is given followed by surgical resection. The pre-operative chemotherapy facilitates complete surgical resection, preserving as much normal liver as possible
- Cisplatin, carboplatin, vincristine, 5fluoro-uracil, doxorubicin are commonly used drugs.

Prognosis

Is dependant on stage (Stage I & II 90% cured; Stage III 60%; Stage IV 20%). The ability to completely resect the tumour is an important factor in cure.

Liver

Hepatocellular carcinoma

Definition

This is a carcinoma of the liver and is less common than Hepatoblastomas in children

Etiology

Associated with hepatitis B & C

Signs and Symptoms

Enlarged liver

Diagnostic Evaluation

- Blood tests - These tumours secrete the tumour marker alpha fetoprotein. Screen for hepatitis B & C
- Ultrasound and CT of the liver
- Chest x-ray and CT lungs

Staging

This is based on the adult TNM system (size of tumour, nodal status and presence of metastases).

Histology

The fibrolamellar sub type is more favorable.

Treatment

- Surgery is the most effective treatment
- Radiation and chemotherapy given intra-arterially along with tumour embolization may be helpful

Prognosis

If resected survival of 50% can be expected.