

## **“PAROTID SURGERY IN PATIENTS OVER SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD”**

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Malignant parotid tumours are rare but become more common in the last decades of life; this increased incidence consists mainly of secondary parotid space involvement from metastasis or direct invasion.

During the last five years, we observed and operated on 84 patients for parotid diseases performing 86 parotidectomies (2 bilateral operations).

The patients, 54 male and 30 female of mean age 60 years (range 4-94), included 30 subjects (35.7%) over seventy-five years old (2 subjects over ninety) consisting of 21 males and 9 females of mean age 80.5 years who are the object of our study. In these 30 patients we observed 2 chronic infections, 6 benign tumours and 22 malignant tumours with only 6 primary neoplastic lesions.

The 16 patients with secondary malignant tumours had previously undergone surgery for parotid lesions in 2 cases, for external ear lesions in 7 cases and for ipsilateral cutaneous face lesions in 7 cases.

The surgical treatment was chosen on the basis of clinical data obtained by imaging techniques, cytological examinations and intraoperative conditions.

We performed 14 extended radical parotidectomies which involved complete removal of the parotid gland and one or more intraglandular (the facial nerve in 6 cases) or adjacent structures (the overlying skin in 10 cases, the masseter muscle in 2 cases, the external ear in 7 cases, the mastoid bone in 3 cases and the maxillary bone in 2 cases).

Three patients died in the postoperative period from heart attack. Five patients died from disease (3 from melanomas -2 after 3 years and 1 after 2 years- and 2 from primary carcinomas -1 after 2 years and 1 after 1 year-). Six patients died without disease from various causes (2 after 4 years, the others after 3,2,1, year and 8 months). Nine patients are alive, 8 NED (1 after 5 years; 1 after 4 years; 4 after 2 years and 2 after 1 year) and 1 with disease in the ethmoid after 2 years.

This experience implies that in old age malignant cancer, in particular secondary tumours of the metastatic and direct infiltrating type, are relatively more frequent than in younger patients. In fact, in the total casuistry, in the present study 31 of the 86 swellings (36%) of the parotid turned out to be malignant tumours while in the group of elderly subject, 22 out of 30 cases (73%) were of malignant origin.