

NIH Workshop on Spinal Cord Tumors

February 12, 2007

Summary

The relative rarity of spinal cord tumors has rendered difficult the study of these diseases. Consequently, understanding of the fundamental biology and optimal treatment of spinal cord tumors is limited, and these diseases continue to inflict considerable morbidity and mortality on both the pediatric and adult populations. As a first step to improve the outcome of patients with spinal cord tumors, the National Institutes of Health Office of Rare Diseases in coordination with the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke supported a workshop on February 12, 2007 to discuss current understanding of these tumors. The overall goal of the meeting was to initiate a process that will translate basic science research into improved clinical care for this group of patients. Workshop goals included 1) a review of current knowledge of the epidemiology of spinal cord tumors, 2) assessment of the pathological classification of spinal cord tumors, 3) definition of key aspects of clinical diagnosis and standardized treatment, 4) a cataloging of the current private and public databases available for the study of spinal cord tumors, 5) presentation of developmental neurobiology and its role in patient treatment, 6) assessment of animal models of central nervous system tumors with respect to applications to human research, and 7) recognition of importance of patients and their advocates in the research process. Research priorities for each of these disciplines were identified as well as areas for inter-disciplinary collaborations for future research.