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Current treatment of infantile hemangiomas

Infantile hemangiomas (IHs) are benign vascular tumors that have characteristic clinical course marked by early proliferation and followed by spontaneous involution. They are the most common tumors of childhood. The heterogeneity of IHs makes it difficult to predict need for treatment and has made it challenging to establish a standardized approach to the management. The vast majority of these tumors do not require any surgical or medical intervention. Despite benign and self-limited nature, some IHs cause complications such as bleeding, ulceration, infection, and functional and cosmetic disability. In addition, they may compromise vital organ functions. Rarely, IHs may be associated with one or more underlying congenital anomalies. Treatments for IHs include topical, intralesional, and systemic therapies. Laser and surgical modalities are also sometimes used depending on the clinical course. Pharmacological therapy has been limited to a few medications. Steroids have remained the first-line therapy for problematic IHs for over 40 years despite their known side effects. Vincristine has emerged as an alternative to interferon for steroid-resistant IHs because of significant interferon's adverse events, especially neurotoxicity. During the past few years, beta-adrenergic blockers have become the preferred first-line therapy for problematic IHs in many centers. The recent discovery of the role of stem cells and of the renin-angiotensin system in the biology of IHs underscores the possibility of more targeted therapies. Education of parents about the natural history, prognosis, benefits and complications of potential treatment is important aspect of the management of IHs.

Biography

Jelena Roganovic completed her MD and Ph.D. from Rijeka University School of Medicine. She is board-certified in pediatric hematology/oncology and pediatrics. She completed her residency in pediatrics in Croatia, and a fellowship in pediatric hematology/oncology in Padua, Italy. Dr Roganovic is the Chief of the Division of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology at Children's Hospital of Rijeka, and Full Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at the University of Rijeka. She has published numerous papers and proceedings in the field of pediatric hematology and oncology, and serves as an editorial review board member of repute.