

Early brain tumour surgery could dramatically improve survival rates

A shift in surgical practice over the last decade towards the earlier removal of slow-growing but ultimately fatal brain tumours has led to dramatic improvements in survival and seizure control for patients, a UCLH and UCL study has found.

Patients with low-grade gliomas (LGGs) had a 50% chance of dying within 10 years of diagnosis in 2006, compared to a 4% chance in 2017, according to an analysis of patient records by Consultant Neurologist Dr Jeremy Rees and his team at the UCLH National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery and the UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology, published in the journal *Neuro-Oncology Practice*.

The number of patients who were seizure-free for 1 year or more after surgery went up from 22% in 2006 to 42% in 2017. Under DVLA rules, these patients would be eligible to drive again, preserving their independence.

By 2017 three times as many patients were undergoing surgery to remove their tumour within 1 year of diagnosis compared with 2006.

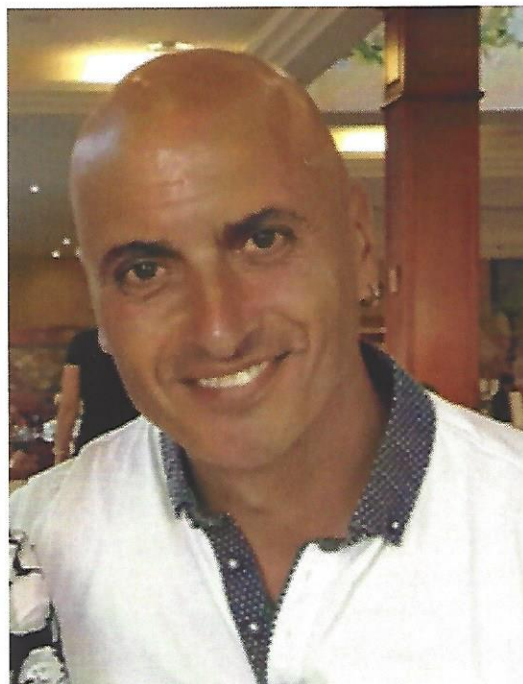
Dr Rees said: "The improvements we saw in survival and seizure control were staggering. It appears that this change in approach – to operate earlier – has led to a step change in how long patients can expect to live.

Low-grade gliomas (grades 1 and 2) make up around 30% of all gliomas which are the most common type of primary brain tumour. They usually progress to higher grades (3 and 4)

which ultimately lead to death. LGGs have an average survival ranging from 5-15 years depending on age.

Surgeons traditionally favoured an approach of 'watchful waiting' until the tumour grew – due in part to the risks inherent in surgery. But since around 2016 teams have taken a much more proactive approach to surgery due to a greater understanding of the risks. Most patients with LGGs are now offered surgery within a year of diagnosis.

Patient Joseph Mora, 50, had surgery at UCLH to successfully remove his brain tumour in 2007, just months after it was discovered. "Life is back to normal now," he said. "I'm just getting on with life now, and I don't worry about the tumour returning."



Patient Joseph Mora said his life is "back to normal" after surgery at UCLH to remove his brain tumour.