The Canadian Journal of Neurological Sciences (2025), 1–2
doi:10.1017/cjn.2025.10426

Canadian Journal of Neurological Sciences
Journal Canadien des Sciences Neurologiques

Neuroimaging Highlight

Intraventricular Primary Diffuse Meningeal Melanomatosis

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Keywords: Brain tumors; neuroimaging; Neuro-oncology; neurosurgery

(Received 10 May 2025; final revisions submitted 16 July 2025; date of acceptance 5 September 2025)

A 76-year-old man presented to our quaternary care neurosurgical center with a 3-month history of confusion, memory deficits and cognitive decline. He had no history of prior malignancy and his family history was unremarkable. Physical examination was notable for disorientation to time and place, without any focal neurological deficits. Detailed dermatologic and ophthalmologic examinations were unremarkable without any evidence of melanoma deposits.

Computed tomography (CT) imaging of the brain revealed an enlarged and avidly enhancing pineal lesion and obstructive hydrocephalus (Figure 1). Diffuse areas of leptomeningeal enhancement were seen, notably in the left cingulate sulcus, left temporal lobe and the roof of the fourth ventricle. We were unable to obtain magnetic resonance imaging due to concerns of incompatibility with a prior pacemaker insertion. Differential diagnosis based on imaging included pineal germ cell tumor, specifically germinoma given the central calcifications, pineal parenchymal tumor and cerebral metastasis.

Given his obstructive hydrocephalus, he was taken urgently to the operating theater for endoscopic third ventriculostomy and endoscopic biopsy. Intraoperatively, there was diffuse intraventricular dissemination of melanin deposits in the lateral ventricle and third ventricle (Figure 2). The pineal region was similarly stained with black melanin deposits and was biopsied. Pathology confirmed a melanocytic neoplasm. Molecular testing revealed MYC and FGR1 gain. The Ki-67 proliferative index was low. Testing for BRAF, PRAME, GNAQ, GNA11, KIT, NRAS and KRAS was negative. A diagnosis of primary diffuse meningeal melanomatosis was made. Postoperative CT demonstrated improved hydrocephalus.

The case was discussed at neuro-oncology conference, and systemic immunotherapy was recommended. However, the patient declined further treatment and opted for a palliative approach.

Primary diffuse meningeal melanomatosis is a rare neoplasm originating from leptomeningeal melanocytes with dissemination throughout the subarachnoid space.[1] It is considered a malignant neoplasm with a poor prognosis; however, published data are limited to case reports and small case series.[2] Substantial heterogeneity in immunohistochemical features, treatment approaches and clinical outcomes has been reported.[3] Furthermore, the prognostic significance and treatment implications of various molecular profiles remain incompletely characterized.[4]

This case illustrates the diagnostic and management challenges of intraventricular primary diffuse meningeal melanomatosis. These tumors can present with obstructive hydrocephalus often requiring urgent cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) diversion. Endoscopic third ventriculoscopy (ETV) allows for simultaneous CSF diversion and tissue diagnosis of pineal lesion tumors. However, if a patient's anatomy is not suitable for ETV, a staged approach with initial surgery for CSF diversion, either with external ventricular drain or a ventriculo-peritoneal shunt, followed by either stereotactic or open biopsy for tissue diagnosis may be required. To our knowledge, our intraoperative images are the first publication to demonstrate the in vivo appearance of intraventricular melanomatosis.

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Cite this article: Rebchuk AD and Zwimpfer TJ. Intraventricular Primary Diffuse Meningeal Melanomatosis. *The Canadian Journal of Neurological Sciences*, https://doi.org/10.1017/cjn.2025.10426

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https://doi.org/10.1017/cjn.2025.10426 Published online by Cambridge University Press

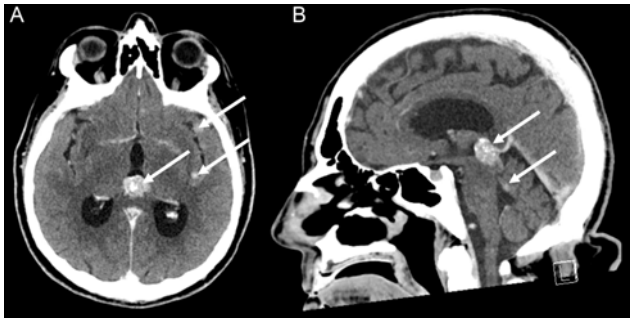


Figure 1. Preoperative computed tomography (CT) demonstrating enhancing lesions within the pineal region, roof of the fourth ventricle and left temporal lobe leptomeninges. Axial (A) and sagittal (B) views.

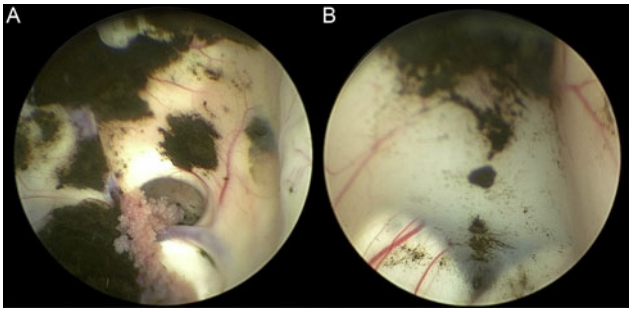


Figure 2. Intraoperative endoscopy demonstrating diffuse black melanocytic lesions within the lateral ventricle (A) and third ventricle (B).

Acknowledgements. The authors thank Dr Stephen Yip for his assistance with the pathological diagnosis.

Author contributions. ADR and TJZ designed the work and wrote the manuscript text. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript prior to submission. All authors agree to be accountable for their contributions and ensure all inquiries related to the work are resolved with documentation.

Funding statement. None to report.

Competing interests. All authors report no conflicts of interest.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/cjn.2025.10426 Published online by Cambridge University Press