Mast cell

A mast cell (also known as a mastocyte or a labrocyte is derived from the myeloid stem cell. It is a part of the immune system and contains many granules rich in histamine and heparin. Although best known for their role in allergy and anaphylaxis, mast cells play an important protective role as well, being intimately involved in wound healing, including angiogenesis, and defense against pathogens.

The mast cell is very similar in both appearance and function to the basophil, another type of white blood cell. They differ in that mast cells are tissue resident, e.g., in mucosal tissues, while basophils are found in the blood.

Mast cells MCs have been detected in various tumors of the central nervous system (CNS), such as gliomas, including glioblastoma multiforme, hemangioblastomas, and meningiomas as well as metastatic brain tumors. MCs were present in as many as 90 % of all high grade meningiomas mainly found in the perivascular areas of the tumor. A correlation between peritumoral edema and MCs was found.

Accumulation of MCs in meningiomas could contribute to the aggressiveness of tumors and to brain inflammation that may be involved in the pathogenesis of additional disorders [1].

1)
Polyzoidis S, Koletsa T, Panagiotidou S, Ashkan K, Theoharides TC. Mast cells in meningiomas and brain inflammation. J Neuroinflammation. 2015 Sep 17;12(1):170. doi: 10.1186/s12974-015-0388-3. PubMed PMID: 26377554.

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