43. CHORDOMA

Definition

Chordoma is a low-grade malignant tumor originating from remnants of the notochord.

Epidemiology

Although a rare tumor, the chordoma is by far the most frequent tumor of the sacrum. The male sex is preferred by 2 to 1. It is a tumor of the adult advanced age, with a maximum incidence after 50 years. Chordoma is exceptionally seen before the age of 30. Less rare in the young age are the cranial chordomas.

Fig. 43-1. Sex, age and localization in 103 cases of sacral and vertebral chordoma (we have no experience with cranial localizations).
**Fig. 43-2. Chordoma of the sacrum**, in a female aged 43 years. Symptoms date back 10 years. Five years previously, intralesional resection and radiation therapy. The patient presented a huge local recurrence with large posterior masses, and died 1 year later with pulmonary metastases.

**Fig. 43-3. Chordoma of the sacrum**, in a male aged 63 years. a) Central osteolysis of the distal sacrum. b) MRI (T1w.i.) shows the anterior bulging of the tumor, well defined by a fibrous capsule and a small cephalad tumor digitation in the sacral canal at S2 level. (Continues on the next page).