

Acute Unilateral Facial Nerve Palsy In Children: A Rare Presentation That Cause A Dramatic Effect

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INTRODUCTION

Facial nerve palsy is a paresis that involves seventh cranial nerve and its division. It is relatively rare and two to three more times less frequent in paediatric population compared to adult.

CASE DESCRIPTION

A 6 years old Malay girl presented to emergency department with acute onset of right side facial asymmetry. Prior to symptom, child has been having on and off febrile episode for the past one week with right ear pain for three days. Examination showed loss of nasolabial fold, drooping of mouth and effaced right forehead consistent with lower motor neuron palsy of seventh cranial nerve features. Meanwhile, otoscope examination revealed mild bulging and erythematous tympanic membrane of right ear. There was no vesicular eruption inside auditory canal. Blood parameters are normal.

DISCUSSION

Although idiopathic Bell's palsy occurs in majority of adult population, it is different in children aged group as there is more likely that an acute unilateral peripheral facial nerve palsy is due to secondary causes such as infection, inflammatory, traumatic or iatrogenic. As in infectious cause, acute otitis media is the most common.

CONCLUSION

Acute onset facial nerve palsy in paediatric population is rare but the dramatic effect creates a great concern to parents. Due to its abrupt onset, missed or delay diagnosis can have significant impact in quality of life. Antibiotic and steroid remain as conservative management that yields favourable outcome.

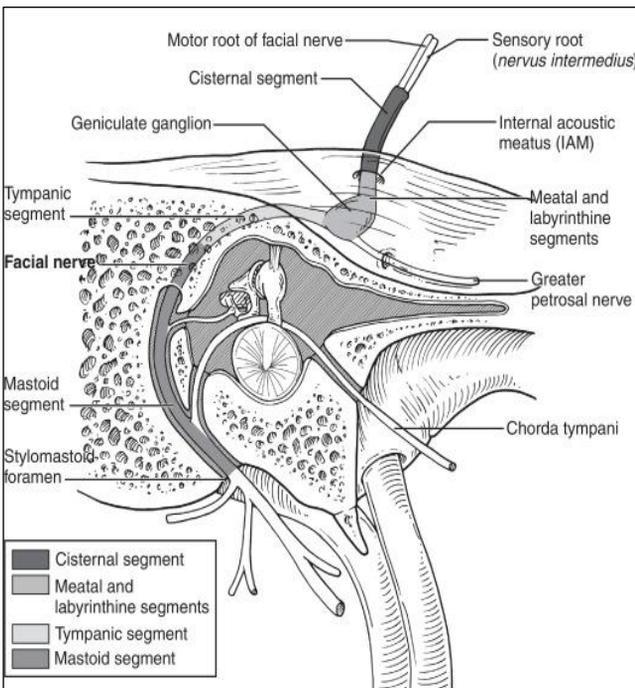


Figure 1 : Facial nerve course within inner ear

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