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Facial nerve paralysis in children: A review

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Abstract

Pediatric facial nerve palsy is a condition with several implications, particularly when occurring in childhood. It represents a serious clinical problem as it causes significant concerns in doctors because of its etiology, its treatment options and its outcome, as well as in little patients and their parents, because of functional and aesthetic outcomes.

There are several described causes of facial nerve paralysis in children, as it can be congenital (due to delivery traumas and genetic or malformative diseases) or acquired (due to infective, inflammatory, neoplastic, traumatic or iatrogenic causes). Nonetheless, in approximately 40-75% of the cases, the cause of unilateral facial paralysis still remains idiopathic. A careful diagnostic workout and differential diagnosis are particularly recommended in case of pediatric facial nerve palsy, in order to establish the most appropriate treatment, as the therapeutic approach differs in relation to the etiology.

Key words: Facial paralysis; Seventh cranial nerve; Children; Bell's palsy; Therapy

Core tip: Pediatric facial nerve palsy can be congenital or acquired and its etiology can remain unknown. Bell's palsy is the most frequent form of facial paralysis also in children; about 70% of these cases has a favorable prognosis with spontaneous resolution. An

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