

Bells Palsy or CVA?



A 63 yr old woman presents with L sided facial weakness. The triage nurse has diagnosed Bells Palsy. The patient thinks it's a stroke.

How would you differentiate between Bells Palsy and CVA on examination of the face (2 marks)

*CVA spares frontalis muscle, so there is normal brow furrowing.*

*In CVA there is normal eye closure and blinking. In Bell's Palsy there isn't*

What other features would you look for if you had diagnosed Bell's Palsy? (2 marks)

*Rash behind ear (Ramsay Hunt Syndrome)*

*Rash elsewhere might signify Lyme disease or Sarcoid*

What symptoms might the patient have experienced in Bells Palsy?(2 marks)

*Pain behind ear*

*Numbness on affected side of face*

*Loss of taste on ipsilateral 2/3 of tongue*

What two drugs, and within what time limits, can be used to treat Bells Palsy (3 marks)

*Prednisolone 1 mg/kg for 1/52 then taper over 2 nd week. Effective in 1<sup>st</sup> 7 days*

*Acyclovir 800mg 5x/day. Effective in 1<sup>st</sup> 72 hrs*

What percentage of patients recover spontaneously (1 mark)

*2/3*

10 minute consultation Bells Palsy BMJ 2005;330:1374

