21M s/p trauma with right facial paralysis 5 weeks after injury

Krithika Srikanthan, MD
Abner Gershon, MD
CT Temporal Bone (coronal)
CT Temporal Bone (coronal)
CT Temporal Bone (axial)
Temporal bone fracture extending through the posterior semicircular canal and facial canal.
Opacified air cells (yellow arrow) & fracture lines (blue arrows)
Opacified air cells (yellow arrow) & fracture lines (blue arrows)
Opacified air cells (yellow arrows) & fracture lines through the posterior semicircular canal (blue arrows)
Temporal Bone fracture

- Traditional classification system indicates the relationship of the fracture line with the long axis of the petrous portion of the temporal bone
  - Longitudinal (70%–90%)
  - Transverse (10%–30%)
- Facial paralysis is more common in patients with a transverse fracture and may be immediate and complete
- More common sensorineural hearing loss
  - Mixed
Temporal Bone fracture

• Designating fractures as **otic capsule–sparing** vs **otic capsule–violating** most important
  – Violating: Otic capsule–violating fractures course through the labyrinth—the cochlea, vestibule, or semicircular canals
    • more commonly associated with complications such as sensorineural hearing loss, cerebrospinal fluid otorrhea, and facial nerve injury
  – Sparing: Otic capsule–sparing fractures are more commonly associated with intracranial injuries such as epidural hematomas and subarachnoid hemorrhages.
Facial nerve injury

• Facial nerve is injured in 7% of patients with a temporal bone fracture
• Most injuries occur in the labyrinthine segment, in the region of the geniculate ganglion
• Immediate posttraumatic paralysis frequently is indicative of transection of the nerve or compression by an osseous fragment
• Delayed onset of paralysis may be explained by development of edema, swelling, or an expanding hematoma causing neural compression with an intact nerve
Temporal bone fracture

• Presentation: usually a sequela of significant blunt head injury

• Rx:
  – Manage facial nerve injury, hearing loss, vestibular dysfunction, and CSF leakage
  – If immediate facial nerve paralysis occurs with loss of electrical response, surgical exploration should be considered.
  – Delayed-onset or incomplete facial paralysis almost always resolves with conservative management, including the use of tapered-dose corticosteroids.
References

