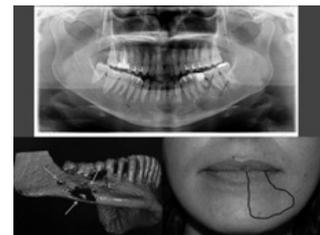


Numb chin syndrome

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Introduction. Numb chin syndrome is a sensory neuropathy characterized by numbness, hypoesthesia or paraesthesia and, rarely, pain in the distribution of the mental nerve. Dental causes, specially iatrogenic ones (e.g., oral surgery), are by far the most common; if not related to those, this complaint is considered a “red flag” symptom of a distant malignant neoplasm. Other possible aetiological factors are: primary tumours, trauma or systemic diseases.

Case Description. We describe cases in which the presence of numbness and paraesthesia in the distribution of mental nerve was the most relevant symptom linked to odontogenic infective causes. A 45-year-old woman (# I) reported a continuous not evocated pain in the left molar region and hypoesthesia of mental nerve; ortopantomography revealed a lytic lesion involving the mandibular canal suggesting an odontogenic infection in relation to 3.6. A 59-year-old man (# II) presented a sudden violent pain in the right premolar region; after few days, hypoesthesia of the mental nerve also appeared. The CT imaging showed an osteolytic area extending to the inferior mandibular edge. The clinical and radiologic examinations confirmed the presence of a large osteolytic infective lesion originated from 4.5. A 63-year-old man (# III) was referred to our department for a violent diffuse pain in the right molar and premolar region; hypoesthesia of the mental nerve soon followed. In CT imaging, an irregular osteolytic lesion was present, with focal erosions of mandibular bone, compatible with a sequestrum originated from chronic apical periodontitis of 4.6 and 4.4.

Conclusion. Numbness of the area of distribution of the mental nerve could be related to odontogenic infective problems also in case of atypical presentation, with no clear relationship with dental foci at the first clinical examination. A careful attempt to find this relationship should always be made before thinking to neoplastic diseases or systemic causes.

References

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