

E-Pearl of the Week

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The Numb Chin Syndrome

Isolated numbness of the chin can indicate a lesion of the mental branch of the mandibular division of the trigeminal nerve. Mental neuropathy is a worrisome clinical syndrome due to an oft-reported association with malignancy. The mechanism of nerve injury can include metastasis to the mandible, direct injury by a local tumor, or leptomeningeal seeding. In patients with a known malignancy, this syndrome often heralds disease progression or relapse. It is also often indicative of a poor prognosis in cancer patients. In patients without a history of cancer, a mental neuropathy necessitates evaluation for malignancy.

Reference

Burt RK, Sharfman WH, Karp BI, Wilson WH. Mental Neuropathy (Numb Chin Syndrome). A harbinger of tumor progression or relapse. *Cancer* 1992;70:877-881.