

Hemifacial spasm is a neurological condition that affects the muscles on one side of the face. It is characterised by involuntary twitching or contractions of the muscles around the eye, cheek, and mouth. The condition is caused by the compression of the facial nerve, which controls the muscles of the face.

The most common cause of hemifacial spasm is a blood vessel that compresses the facial nerve as it exits the brainstem. Other causes may include facial nerve injury, a tumour. Recovery following Bell's palsy (facial nerve paralysis) can lead to a similar appearance known as facial nerve synkinesis.

Symptoms of hemifacial spasm include involuntary contractions of the muscles on one side of the face, which can cause twitching, pulling, or facial distortion. The contractions may occur intermittently or persistently and can worsen with stress or fatigue.

The diagnosis of hemifacial spasm is usually made based on the patient's history and physical examination. Tests such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) may be ordered to identify the underlying cause.

The treatment of hemifacial spasm involves the use of botulinum toxin injections, which temporarily weaken the muscles and reduce the involuntary contractions. These injections need to be repeated every few months.

Other treatments include medications such as anticonvulsants and muscle relaxants, and in severe cases, surgery to decompress the facial nerve.

Living with hemifacial spasm can be challenging, but there are several things you can do to manage your symptoms. Resting the affected muscles, applying heat or cold, and practicing stress-reduction techniques such as yoga or meditation may help. It is also important to maintain a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and get enough restful sleep.

If you think you may have hemifacial spasm, it is important to seek medical attention from a neurologist. They can help diagnose the condition and develop a treatment plan that is tailored to your specific needs. With proper treatment and management, most people with hemifacial spasm are able to live normal, active lives.