

MEDICAL



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Q: What is Trigeminal neuralgia and how is this treated?

A: Trigeminal neuralgia also known as tic douloureux, is a disabling facial pain syndrome that occurs along the distribution of the trigeminal or 5th cranial nerve. It is characterized by episodic, severe, burning or shock-like pain typically affecting one-side of the face and lasting anywhere from a few seconds to a couple of minutes. The pain can be triggered by stimuli such as touching or washing the face, brushing the teeth, shaving, chewing or applying make-up. These attacks can occur in rapid succession and can be quite incapacitating.

There are several facial pain syndromes that may closely resemble trigeminal neuralgia. Clinical evaluation is aimed at excluding a cause along the course of the nerve such as pressure from an enlarged loop of a blood vessel. A small number of patients with multiple sclerosis may also experience this painful condition.

There are several medical options for treatment of this excruciating pain syndrome. For those patients who are refractory to medical therapy, surgical procedures are sometimes considered.

For more information, visit the website of the Kalamazoo Nerve Center.

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