

# Teaching Video NeuroImages: Cephalic tetanus

## Not every facial weakness is Bell palsy

Fábio A. Nascimento, MD, Nadia Hammoud, MD, and Felipe D. Augusto, MD

*Neurology*® 2019;93:e1995-e1996. doi:10.1212/WNL.00000000000008536

### Correspondence

Dr. Nascimento  
nascimento.fabio.a@gmail.com

### Figure Clinical examination at presentation



(A) Left frontal laceration prior to debridement and (B) left upper and lower facial weakness.

A 54-year-old Brazilian woman with unknown immunization status presented with unilateral facial weakness and trismus 1 week after facial trauma. Examination revealed left frontal laceration, left upper and lower facial weakness, and trismus (figure and video). CT of the head and face were unremarkable. She was diagnosed with cephalic tetanus and treated with tetanus immunoglobulin and active vaccination, metronidazole, and supportive care. The wound was debrided and 2 wooden foreign bodies were collected.

Cephalic tetanus accounts for 1% to 3% of all tetanus cases. These patients typically present with trismus and cranial nerve dysfunction—generally the 7th, but also the 3rd, 4th, 6th, and/or 12th—following injury to the ipsilateral face.

### MORE ONLINE

#### → Teaching slides

[links.lww.com/WNL/A998](https://links.lww.com/WNL/A998)

#### ▶ Videos

From the Department of Neurology (F.A.N., N.H.), Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX; and Department of Neurosurgery (F.D.A.), Hospital Irmã Denise-CASU, Caratinga, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Go to [Neurology.org/N](https://Neurology.org/N) for full disclosures. Funding information and disclosures deemed relevant by the authors, if any, are provided at the end of the article.

Despite its rarity, cephalic tetanus should always be considered in patients presenting with trismus and facial weakness following trauma, especially in developing countries and in the elderly.<sup>1,2</sup>

### Study funding

No targeted funding reported.

### Disclosure

F.A. Nascimento is a member of the *Neurology*<sup>®</sup> Resident & Fellow Section Editorial team. N. Hammoud and F.D. Augusto report no disclosures relevant to the manuscript. Go to [Neurology.org/N](http://Neurology.org/N) for full disclosures.

---

### Appendix Authors

Name	Location	Role	Contribution
<b>Fábio A. Nascimento, MD</b>	Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX	Author	Designed study, analyzed the data, drafted the manuscript

---

### Appendix (continued)

Name	Location	Role	Contribution
<b>Nadia Hammoud, MD</b>	Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX	Author	Designed study, analyzed the data, drafted the manuscript
<b>Felipe D. Augusto, MD</b>	Hospital Irmã Denise-CASU, Caratinga, MG, Brazil	Author	Designed and conceptualized study, analyzed the data, revised the manuscript

### References

1. Weinstein L. Tetanus. *N Engl J Med* 1973;289:1293–1296.
2. Jagoda A, Riggio S, Burguières T. Cephalic tetanus: a case report and review of the literature. *Am J Emerg Med* 1988;6:128–130.

# Neurology®

## Teaching Video NeuroImages: Cephalic tetanus: Not every facial weakness is Bell palsy

Fábio A. Nascimento, Nadia Hammoud and Felipe D. Augusto

*Neurology* 2019;93:e1995-e1996

DOI 10.1212/WNL.00000000000008536

**This information is current as of November 18, 2019**

<b>Updated Information &amp; Services</b>	including high resolution figures, can be found at: <a href="http://n.neurology.org/content/93/21/e1995.full">http://n.neurology.org/content/93/21/e1995.full</a>
<b>References</b>	This article cites 2 articles, 0 of which you can access for free at: <a href="http://n.neurology.org/content/93/21/e1995.full#ref-list-1">http://n.neurology.org/content/93/21/e1995.full#ref-list-1</a>
<b>Permissions &amp; Licensing</b>	Information about reproducing this article in parts (figures, tables) or in its entirety can be found online at: <a href="http://www.neurology.org/about/about_the_journal#permissions">http://www.neurology.org/about/about_the_journal#permissions</a>
<b>Reprints</b>	Information about ordering reprints can be found online: <a href="http://n.neurology.org/subscribers/advertise">http://n.neurology.org/subscribers/advertise</a>

*Neurology*® is the official journal of the American Academy of Neurology. Published continuously since 1951, it is now a weekly with 48 issues per year. Copyright © 2019 American Academy of Neurology. All rights reserved. Print ISSN: 0028-3878. Online ISSN: 1526-632X.

