

In ENT

Sudden sensorineural hearing loss (SSNHL) as a manifestation of COVID 19 – how to manage?

SSNHL is a rare manifestation of COVID 19. It can present in isolation or along with other symptoms of COVID.

Clinical Features

- Usually affects one ear
- Sudden, almost complete loss of hearing
- Accompanied by tinnitus and vertigo at times

How to diagnose?

- Ear examination shows normal tympanic membrane
- Tuning fork tests – Rinne's test is positive in the affected ear
- Pure tone audiometry shows sensorineural hearing loss pattern

Treatment

- If SSNHL presents in the context of a COVID wave, it is important to send patient for RT PCR testing to rule out COVID
- Early use of oral corticosteroids and intratympanic steroid injections has a favourable response and good prognosis
- In patients whom steroids are contraindicated (e.g. diabetics), Intratympanic injection of steroids can be considered

Take home message

- SSNHL can be the sole manifestation of COVID 19 or can occur with other symptoms
- High index of suspicion is required
- Early treatment with intratympanic steroids gives good prognosis

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