

Ramsay Hunt Syndrome

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In news— Pop sensation Justin Bieber has recently revealed that he has been diagnosed with a condition called Ramsay Hunt Syndrome, which has fully paralysed the right side of his face.

What is Ramsay Hunt Syndrome?

- **Ramsay Hunt Syndrome is neurological disease in which a virus – Varicella Zoster causes inflammation of the nerves involved in facial movements.**
- **When the nerves get inflamed, they lose their ability to function, leading to temporary facial palsy** or paralysis, which means facial muscles in the infected person cannot receive necessary signals to function properly.
- There are 12 cranial nerves in the body and Ramsay Hunt Syndrome is the viral infection **impacting the 7th cranial nerve that is involved in facial movements.**
- The inflammation caused by the Varicella Zoster Virus makes the nerve ineffective.
- **The symptoms of this Syndrome include painful, red rash and blisters in and around the ear,** and facial paralysis on the same side.
- Patients also report hearing **loss in the ear that has been impacted apart from Tinnitus or ringing sounds** and **inability to close the eye causes dryness.**
- It is treated using antiviral drugs, steroids and physiotherapy.
- The disease is **not contagious** but can lead to chickenpox in those not vaccinated for the disease.
- The disease is reversible.
- Patients get cured within 15 days to three months of starting the treatment.

The Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV)-

- It is the **same virus that causes chickenpox and shingles.**
- According to the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, **this virus belongs to the herpesvirus group and can stay in the body as a latent infection.**
- The **virus can stay dormant in a person's body and can get reactivated due to weakening of the immune system.**
- Stress is also considered a trigger as it depresses the immune system.
- Some reports also suggest that **T-cell dysfunction caused by coronavirus infection can reactivate VZV.**