Table 1

Red flags and diagnoses in facial palsy

Red flag	Cause	Potential diagnoses
Forehead sparing with other acute neurology	Upper motor neurone sparing	Cerebrovascular event
Parotid mass	-	Parotid tumour
Hearing loss, tinnitus, vertigo	Associated compression of vestibulocochlear nerve	Cerebellopontine angle tumour
Otitis externa in a diabetic patient	Erosion of external auditory canal	Malignant otitis externa
Trauma (or recent surgery)	-	Trauma
Acute severe or chronic otitis media	Middle ear or mastoid disease	Otitis media +/- cholesteatoma
Bilateral facial weakness	-	Sarcoidosis, Guillain-Barré syndrome
Systemic upset	-	Ramsay Hunt syndrome, HIV, leukaemia, sarcoidosis, Lyme disease
Herpetic vesicles/severe pain	Herpes simplex virus in geniculate ganglion	Ramsay Hunt syndrome
Other significant neurology	-	CVA, intracranial tumour, multiple sclerosis
Tick bite (or exposure) Erythema chronicum migrans	-	Lyme disease (neuroborreliosis)