ANATOMICAL VARIATION OF PALMARIS LONGUS: TENDINOUS ORIGIN AND FLESHY INSERTION

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ABSTRACT

A tendinous origin and fleshy insertion of palmaris longus muscle was observed in the left forearm during routine dissection which was performed on adult male cadaver in the department of Anatomy, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College. It was having long tendinous origin from the medial epicondyle of the humerus and the surrounding deep fascia. It was fusiform at the lower middle of the forearm. The fleshy muscular insertion was noted to the flexor retinaculum and few muscular fibers interdigitate with flexor carpi ulnaris muscle and palmar aponeurosis. The length of tendon was 19 inches and fleshy muscular length was 11 inches. The median nerve and ulnar nerve was covered by this fleshy insertion. This palmaris longus variation is helpful for the surgeon and the radiologist, orthopaedic, plastic surgeon during any diagnosis of the forearm because this fleshy part of muscle can compress the median nerve and ulnar nerve or it can be mistaken as a tumor or ganglion during radiological or clinical examination.

KEYWORDS: Palmaris longus, tendinous origin, fleshy insertion, median nerve, ulnar nerve, carpal tunnel syndrome.

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Access this Article online

Quick Response code

Web site: International Journal of Anatomy and Research
ISSN 2321-4287
www.ijmhr.org/ijar.htm

DOI: 10.16965/ijar.2014.558

Received: 18 Dec 2014
Peer Review: 18 Dec 2014 Published (O):31 Jan 2015
Accepted: 20 Jan 2015 Published (P):31 Mar 2015

INTRODUCTION

Palmaris longus is a slender fusiform muscle of forearm which arises from medial epicondyle of humerus, deep fascia and from the septa between it and its neighbors, and lie medial to flexor carpi radialis. In the middle of the forearm it thins out into a flat tendon which passes superficial to the flexor retinaculum but some of the fibers from the tendon interweave with the transverse fibers of the retinaculum and inserts into the apex of palmar aponeurosis [1,2]. The tendon of this muscle can be used as a graft during many surgical procedures including pulley
MATERIALS AND METHODS

In routine dissection of left forearm of an adult male cadaver in the department of anatomy, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College a variation was noted. The cadaver studied did not show any gross anomalies or evidence of surgical procedures on the skin around the area dissected. The superficial flexors of the forearm were dissected and cleaned and the palmaris longus muscle specimen was measured and photographed.

RESULTS

In our study we have found palmaris longus muscle on the left forearm having long tendinous origin from the medial epicondyle of the humerus and the surrounding deep fascia. It was fusiform at the lower middle of the forearm. The fleshy muscular insertion was noted to the flexor retinaculum and few muscular fibers interdigitate with flexor carpi ulnaris muscle and palmar aponeurosis. The length of tendon was 19 inches and fleshy muscular length was 11 inches (Fig 1). The median nerve and ulnar nerve was covered by this fleshy insertion.

DISCUSSION

The palmaris longus muscle belongs to retrogressive muscle in human body. This muscle is present in the superficial compartment of forearm. The tendon passes in front of the flexor retinaculum and is continuous with central part of palmar aponeurosis and responsible for flexion of metacarpophalangeal joint, carpal flexion and thumb abduction. The palmar aponeurosis is the degenerated distal part of palmaris longus and it is regressive muscle in the higher vertebrate phylogeny. It is also noted that it is absent in the higher apes (gibbons and gorilla) and lower primates like urangutan [8,9]. This is due to the gradual development of prehension achieved by diversion of muscle strength for the free movements of parts of hands [10]. The palmaris longus variation is helpful for the surgeon and the radiologist during any diagnosis of the forearm because this fleshy part of muscle can be mistaken as a tumor or ganglion [11]. Many studies have shown the unilateral and bilateral absence of palmaris longus. Columbus book, entitled De Re Anatomica without any illustration was the first...
to describe the absence of palmaris longus muscle which was published soon after his death in 1559 [12].

The various variations seen in palmaris longus muscle show all the phases of muscle development which range from a type that is completely muscular from its origin to insertion to a type that is only a fibrous vestige remain. These variations may be seen in form of centrally place belly, entirely peripherally placed belly and also in the form of digastric muscle [13]. Palmaris longus muscle variation has been associated with carpal tunnel syndrome due to extra pressure on the median nerve proximal to its insertion in the carpal tunnel. It has also been reported in few studies associated with fleshy insertion and tendinous origin of palmaris longus muscle [5,14]. Most of the previous study explained the median nerve compression in relation to this palmaris longus variation. In this present study both median nerve and ulnar nerve was covered by this fleshy insertion of palmaris longus muscle.

This palmaris longus variation is helpful for the surgeon and the radiologist, orthopaedic, plastic surgeon during any diagnosis of the forearm because this fleshy part of muscle can be mistaken as a tumor or ganglion during radiological or clinical examination, carpal tunnel syndrome.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank Mr.Chaman Sen Senior Lab Technician and Mr.Balakram photographer of Anatomy department for the illustrations.

Conflicts of Interests: None

REFERENCES


