

Case Report

BILATERAL ANATOMICAL VARIATION IN THE ARTERIAL SUPPLY OF FACE INVOLVING THE FACIAL AND TRANSVERSE FACIAL ARTERY

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ABSTRACT

We present a case-report whereby a bilateral variation in the arterial supply of face was seen. The facial artery which is the main artery of face was seen terminating in the lower part of the face, as the inferior labial artery and few other branches; the transverse facial artery, which supplements the facial artery normally, was seen to enlarge and take over the course of facial artery, giving the superior labial and lateral nasal branches. The small pre-masseteric branch arising from facial artery was seen only on right side of face. It was absent on left side. Accurate knowledge of the normal and variant arterial anatomy of the facial artery is important for vascular radiology and will provide an anatomical basis to assist surgeons in performing maxillo-facial surgeries successfully. The details of this variation and its clinical significance are discussed herein.

KEYWORDS: Facial Artery; Transverse Facial Artery; Face; Inferior labial; Superior labial; Lateral Nasal.

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INTRODUCTION

The facial artery and superficial temporal artery arise from the external carotid artery. The facial artery which is usually the main artery of the face, is superficial and pursues a tortuous course from the anteroinferior border of masseter upto the medial angle of the eye. The tortuosity presumably allows it to stretch when the face is distorted during jaw opening. It supplies branches to the adjacent muscles and skin of the face. Its named branches on the face are the pre-masseteric artery, the superior and inferior labial arteries and the lateral nasal artery. The part of the artery distal to its terminal branch is called the angular artery.

Premasseteric artery is a small inconstant artery. When present, it passes upwards along the anterior border of masseter and supplies the

surrounding tissues.

The inferior labial artery arises just below the angle of the mouth, passes upwards and forward sinuously near the margin of the lower lip, between the muscle and the mucous membrane.

Superior labial artery is larger and more tortuous than the inferior labial artery, and has a similar course along the superior labial margin.

Lateral nasal artery is given off by the side of the nose. It may be replaced by a branch from the superior labial artery [1].

Facial artery is known to show some variations in its origin, course and branching pattern [2].

Superficial temporal artery arises as the terminal branch of external carotid in the parotid gland behind the neck of the mandible.