

Case Report

NUMBERS MATTER : CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ADDITIONAL BELLY OF FIRST AND SECOND LUMBRICAL MUSCLES OF THE HAND

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ABSTRACT

In a routine dissection conducted in the Department of Anatomy, Amrita School of Medicine Kochi, additional origins of the first and second lumbricals were observed on the right hand of a male cadaver. The additional belly originated from the radial side of the tendon of flexor digitorum superficialis (FDS) of the index finger, deep to the flexor retinaculum. Distally the tendon of both bellies united and inserted to the dorsal digital expansion of the index finger. In the case of the second lumbrical the additional belly arose from the ulnar side of the tendon of Flexor digitorum profundus (FDP) of the index finger and inserted into the dorsal digital expansion of middle finger. Knowledge of possible variations helps the clinician find aetiology for various compressive syndromes so that treatment modality can be tailored and customised. This presentation will add to the compendium of information.

KEYWORDS: Additional belly, Flexor digitorum superficialis, Flexor digitorum profundus, Median 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

Received: 16 June 2014

Peer Review: 16 June 2014 Published (O):31 July 2014

Accepted: 14 July 2014 Published (P):30 Sep 2014

INTRODUCTION

The human hand is prehensile. The reason is the presence of numerous small intrinsic muscles in this region. The lumbricals are a set of muscles of this group responsible for fine and delicate tasks such as sewing and upward strokes of writing. The lumbrical muscles of the hand flex the metacarpophalangeal joints and extend the interphalangeal joints. They are unique in that they have no bony attachment - proximally they are attached to the tendons of FDP and distally to the extensor expansion and thereby connecting the flexors and extensors [1].

They are numbered from lateral to medial side as 1-4. The first and second arise from the radial side and palmar surfaces of tendons of index

and middle fingers respectively. The third is from the adjacent side of tendons of middle and ring finger and the fourth from adjoining sides of tendons of ring and little finger. They insert into the corresponding extensor expansion in the vicinity of the metacarpophalangeal joint. The first two are unipennate and the last two are bipennate [2]. The innervation of the lumbricals follows the innervation of the parent unit of the FDP and hence the first two lumbricals are innervated by the median nerve and the medial two by the ulnar nerve [3].

CASE REPORT

During routine dissection for the first year medical students of the Amrita School of Medi-