

Unusual branch of the lingual artery supplies the infrahyoid muscles: a dissection study

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The lingual artery arises from the external carotid artery and supplies the oral floor and the tongue. During its course gives four branches: deep lingual artery, sublingual artery, the dorsal lingual artery and the suprahyoid or hyoid artery. This last runs along the upper border of the hyoid bone supplying the muscles attached to it.

In this work, we reported a unilateral anatomical variation of the branching pattern of the lingual artery, which was observed during dissection studies at the University of Brescia. We found an accessory branch originating from the starting part of the lingual artery. This branch run down and medially and supplied the infrahyoid strap muscles, which normally are supplied by arteries originating from the superior thyroid artery, the inferior thyroid artery, and the internal mammary artery.

So, considering that similar case has been not yet reported in literature and considering the current use of the infrahyoid strap muscles as pedicled myocutaneous flaps for reconstructing surgical defects in the head and neck [1-2], this vascular variation appears interesting to be reported for appropriate clinical and surgical technical consideration.

References

- [1] Tincani et al. (2006) Head and neck reconstruction using infrahyoid myocutaneous flaps. Sao Paulo Med J 124: 271.
- [2] Minni et al. (2010) The infrahyoid myocutaneous flap in intra-oral reconstruction as an alternative to free flaps. Acta Otolaryngol 130: 733.

Key words

Lingual artery, infrahyoid muscles, accessory branch, dissection.