

Variations in position and number of greater and lesser palatine foramina in Sri Lankan skulls

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Anatomical variations in position of the greater and number of the lesser palatine foramina in Sri Lankans is not documented. The study was carried out to ascertain the location of the greater palatine foramen and the number of lesser palatine foramina in Sri Lankan adult human skulls.

Eighty three dry, adult Sri Lankan human skulls with full eruption of third molar teeth and twenty edentulous adult Sri Lankan skulls were examined to measure the locations and directions of greater palatine foramen and the number of lesser palatine foramina.

In 57.83% (96/166) the greater palatine foramen was medial or opposite the third molar region. The straight distance to the greater palatine foramen from the mid palatine suture was 1.37 ± 0.234 cm (range 1.01 – 1.67 cm). The location of the foramen from the posterior border of the palate was 0.35 ± 0.238 (range 0.1 – 0.75). The usually accepted description as opposite the upper second molar was observed in 1.2% (2/166).

The direction of opening of the foramen in to the oral cavity was observed to be in an inferior anterior and medial direction in 93.20% (192/206).

The number of lesser palatine foramina range from 0-5 in each side with one being the most commonest (46.66% = 92/206)

The most common position of the greater palatine foramen being medial or opposite the third molar could be used as a guide line when giving the greater palatine nerve block anesthesia prior to minor oral surgeries of the maxilla in Sri Lankans.

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