

Correspondence

Anatomical facts on the marginal mandibular branch of the facial nerve

To the Editor

We read with much interest the article 'Marginal mandibular branch of the facial nerve in human fetuses' by Kirici et al.¹ The authors meticulously described the anatomy of the marginal mandibular branch (MMB) of the facial nerve in fetuses. We wish to highlight a few aspects of the MMB. Although, there are only a few past studies conducted on MMB in fetuses, there is one research article mentioned neurapraxia of the MMB of facial nerve during midlevel forceps delivery.² Hence, the clinical implications may not be undermined. The authors also mentioned in the methods section that the fetuses were 23 months old (with range; 16-32 weeks). The range does not correspond to the age of fetuses and we assume that the numerical data may be incorrect. Different numerical data were given for the topographical anatomy of the MMB. These may be important for plastic surgeons. It is really interesting to compare the measurements taken in the cadaver to that of the living. A 2% shrinkage factor may have to be taken into account.

The authors have correctly pointed out that congenital deformities may be linked to the anomalies of the nerve. One really thinks of the importance of the anastomosis. Does that mean that the innervation is spared if supplied with different anastomosis? Facial nerve supplies motor innervation to the face, hence, any anomaly of its branches may involve the concerned facial muscle that supplies. The MMB supplies risorius and the muscles of lower lip and chin, which act to produce grinning or smiling. The grinning or smiling may be absent in cases when the MMB is injured, thereby helping the clinician to suspect the involvement of the MMB branch of the facial nerve. It was interesting to note that in all cases there were no connection between

the MMB of the facial nerve and the mental nerve. On the contrary, standard textbooks of anatomy mentioned that the mental nerve communicates with the terminal filaments of the MMB of the facial nerve.³ A study in a Korean population mentioned the communication of the MMB and the mental nerve and also documented the fact that these 2 nerves even share the common epineurium covering.⁴ Further, research may be needed to study the communication between these nerves. Overall, it is an interesting anatomy article with important clinical implications. We applaud the effort of the authors and the editor for publishing such an informative article.

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Reply from the Author

No reply was received from the Author.

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