

## **ANATOMICAL VARIATIONS IN COMMON AND EXTERNAL CAROTID ARTERIES IN SRI LANKANS - A PRELIMINARY STUDY**

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Carotid arteries are the main sources of blood to the structures in the head and neck region. Normally, the right and left Common Carotid arteries differ in origin and length, they pursue a similar course and distribution after being divided into External and Internal carotid arteries in the neck. The normal course and distribution of these arteries has been studied and well documented. Although some of the anatomical variations in these structures have been identified and reported earlier, such data is available only for western populations.

During this study, the origin, course and the level of bifurcation of the common carotid arteries, branching pattern and important relations of the external carotid arteries and the diameters of these vessels at different anatomical levels were looked into while special attention was paid to identify the anatomical variations.

Although it is not possible to draw any final conclusions, the results of this preliminary study shows that anatomical variations of common external carotid arteries are relatively common among the Sri Lankans. Higher or lower bifurcation and unusually tortuous course of common carotids and several variations in the course and branching pattern of external carotids, which were found during the study, are reported here.