

RETROESOPHAGEAL RIGHT SUBCLAVIAN ARTERY – A CASE REPORT

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Retroesophageal right subclavian artery is a congenital anomaly of the aortic arch which is said to be found in a frequency of 0.2 – 2.5 % (Rahman 1993).

A cadaver of a 45 year-old Sri Lankan male with this anomaly was found during a routine dissection class. Instead of its normal origin from the right brachiocephalic trunk, here the right subclavian artery (RSA) originated independently from the arch of aorta as its fourth branch, i.e. dorsal and distal to the left subclavian artery. A Kommerell's diverticulum was observed at its origin (42 mm in diameter). Then the artery coursed upwards behind the trachea and the oesophagus to the right side of the thoracic cavity where it was distributed as the normal artery.

The right inferior laryngeal nerve passed directly into the larynx as a non- recurrent laryngeal nerve. The oesophagus showed a marked oblique groove (37 mm long and 6 mm deep), on its posterior aspect where it was in contact with the RSA. This is known to be an unusual cause of dysphagia ("dysphagia lusoria") in adults.

The subclavian artery and the recurrent laryngeal nerve on the left side had a normal course of origin and distribution.