3 - Clinical Anatomy

PO-064 - (23844) - UNUSUAL SKULL BASIS FORAMINA – HIDDEN TREASURES LEFT BY EMISSARY VEINS.

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No conflict of interest

One important landmark of human skulls resides on the variability of the foramina that establish communication between the interior and the outside of the skull. The earliest description of emissary veins belongs to *VESALIUS*, who in 1643 first published drawings of human skull basis, including the unilateral emissary vein foramen which is still worldwide recognized as "foramen of Vesalius".

Upon observation of 20 human skulls from the Anatomy Department of the NOVA Medical School of Lisbon, we reviewed several unusual skull basis foramina variations, with a collection of original images of ossified traces of emissary veins, with comments on their first descriptors.
Many of the foramina of the skull basis develop since embryonic stages, around the passage of cranial nerves, and some are divided by ligaments, to allow the passage of vascular structures. The latter ossification of these ligaments, provides the appearance of duplicated foramina, fostering anatomical variation. The earlier or quicker ossification of the primitive skull sutures may account for the absence of emissary vein foramina in some of the adult human skulls, thus explaining the relatively high frequency of absence of these foramina
The success of many neurosurgical procedures may depend on the previous recognition of anatomical variations of the skull basis. These emissary veins, when present, or passing through common foramina for cranial nerves, provide communication between venous plexus on the outer surface and the inner content of the skull, thus providing important routes for the spread of nerve infections, or meningitis.

Palavras-chave : cranium basis,, emissary veins,, cranial foramen