Variations in the origin of iliolumbar artery with its clinical significance

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Abstract---Introduction: The Iliolumbar artery mainly arises from the posterior division of the internal iliac artery. It extends oblique superiorly and laterally in front of the sacroiliac joint and lumbosacral trunk. It crosses the obturator nerve and external iliac vessels & reaches the medial edge of the psoas major. The aim of our study was to know the origin variability of the Iliolumbar artery. This helps to prevent any iatrogenic injury during various surgeries. Materials and Methods: 50 formalin-fixed adult human pelvic halves with known sex were procured from the Department of Anatomy, Medical College, Baroda. Site of origin of the Iliolumbar Artery was identified. Results: In the current study, we observed that the origin of the Iliolumbar Artery was from the posterior division of IIA in 52%, 38% from the trunk of the internal iliac artery, 4% from the single trunk with obturator artery from posterior division, and 6% absent. Conclusion:
Introduction

The iliolumbar artery (ILA) arises from the posterior division/trunk of the internal iliac artery, a branch of the common iliac artery (from the abdominal aorta). It originates within the pelvic cavity and from its origin it arches backwards and ascends laterally out of the pelvic inlet towards the iliac fossa. It travels anterior to the sacroiliac joint and lumbosacral nerve trunk, passing behind the obturator nerve, external iliac vessels to reach the medial border of the psoas major muscle. The iliolumbar artery divides into lumbar and iliac branches just posterior to the medial border of the psoas major muscle. These two branches supply the surrounding structures and muscles of the posterior abdominal wall. The iliolumbar artery is usually the first branch of the posterior division of the internal iliac artery & the only pelvic artery ascending from pelvic cavity. The variability of origin of the ILA leads to variability in its course result in modifying arterial supply of the surrounding structures (lumbosacral trunk etc.) which is significant for surgeons, radiologists, orthopedics, Obstetricians and Gynecologists to minimize the postoperative complications. The iliolumbar artery can be damaged during the surgical procedures of lumbar/lumbosacral vertebrae, lumbosacral spinal endoscopic procedures\(^2\)\(^3\) and in procedures of embolization. Iliolumbar artery is used as a feeding pedicle in iliac crest flaps.\(^1\) Its proximity to the sacroiliac joint leads iliolumbar artery at risk of damage during posterior pelvic fractures (open book or shearing fractures).\(^4\)\(^5\) The present study aims to discover the variations in the origin of the iliolumbar artery as well as review the incidence of the variations in the ILA origin in the various other studies.

Materials and Methods

50 formalin-fixed adult human pelvic halves with known sex (11 males and 14 females) were procured from the Department of Anatomy, Medical College, Baroda. Specimens were collected for the routine dissection. Any cadavers with previously operated pelvic region were excluded from the study. The common iliac artery, the external and internal iliac artery with its branches were dissected after removing the fat, and loose connective tissue surrounding the arteries. The site of origin of the iliolumbar Artery (ILA) was identified & noted. The course of ILA was traced & its relation with surrounding structures was observed.

Observations & Results

The origin of the iliolumbar artery, observed in the total 50 specimens of our study, was classified into 3 different categories.
1. From the posterior division of the internal iliac artery which is normal type.
2. Directly from the trunk of the internal iliac artery before its division into anterior & posterior trunk. (Figure 1)
3. From the Single trunk with obturator artery arising from posterior division of the internal iliac artery. (Figure 2)

It was observed that 24 out of 50 (48%) bisected pelvises demonstrated a variation of the iliolumbar artery origin, as given in table 1.

Table 1. Shows the incidence of variations in the origin of the iliolumbar artery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Origin of Iliolumbar Artery</th>
<th>No. of Specimen</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Posterior division proper</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Trunk of IIA</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Single Trunk with obturator Artery (Arising from posterior division)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pie chart shows the incidence of variations in the origin of the iliolumbar artery

Figure 1: Right pelvic half shows the origin of the Iliolumbar artery directly from the trunk of the internal iliac artery. CIA: Common iliac artery; EIA: External iliac artery IIA: internal iliac Artery; AD: Anterior Division; PD: Posterior Division; IIA: Iliolumbar Artery ON: Obturator nerve
Figure 2: Left pelvic half shows the origin of the Iliolumbar artery from the common Trunk with obturator Artery arising from Posterior division of the internal iliac artery. EIA: External iliac artery IIA: internal iliac Artery; AD: Anterior Division; PD: Posterior Division; IIA: Iliolumbar artery OA: Obturator artery

Current study also shows the number of iliolumbar arteries present in the hemipelvis Iliolumbar artery is present as a single branch in 45 out of 50 (90%) specimen, as double branches arising from two different points from internal iliac artery in 2 specimens(4%) (Figure 3) and is absent in 3 specimens(6%) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 shows the number of Iliolumbar arteries present in the pelvic half

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Incidence (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Double</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pie chart 2 shows the Number of Iliolumbar artery in the pelvic half.
Figure 3: Left pelvic half shows the double origin of the Iliolumbar artery, one direct from the trunk of the Internal iliac Artery & other from the Posterior division of the internal iliac artery. CIA: Common iliac artery; EIA: External iliac artery IIA: internal iliac Artery; AD: Anterior Division; PD: Posterior Division; ILA: Iliolumbar artery OA: Obturator artery

Discussion

The iliolumbar artery and its branches are susceptible to iatrogenic injuries during various surgical procedures involving sacroiliac joint like anterior approaches to the sacroiliac joint for arthrodesis or internal fixation, resulting in intraoperative hemorrhages. The surgeons, especially while doing pelvic surgeries, should be aware of the normal anatomy of the iliolumbar artery and its variations for the successful ligation of the internal iliac artery and for the safe surgical outcomes. The location and the variations of the iliolumbar artery are significant for surgeons since it is used as a supply pedicle in bone flaps. In our study, we observed that the origin of the Iliolumbar Artery was from the posterior division in 52% (26), 38% (19) from the trunk of the internal iliac artery, 4% (2) from the single trunk with obturator artery from posterior division, and 6% (3) it was absent. The posterior division of the internal iliac artery is the most common origin of the Iliolumbar artery. Valchkevich Dzmitry et al. Waseem Al Talalwah et al. Teli CG et al observed that the origin of the Iliolumbar artery was from the posterior division in 73.3% (22) 77.90% & 80% (32) respectively, a finding which was similar with our study. While in other studies ofparul et al., Ravi Shankar Gadagi et al., TuranKoç et al, Kiray A et al., Yuvaraj Maria Francis, Rusu MC et al., the iliolumbar artery originated from trunk of IIA in 66.66% (16), 36.67% (11), 57.14% (12), 71.4% (30), 75%, 52.50% respectively - a finding which was different from our study. A comparison of variations with respect to the origin of the iliolumbar artery (ILA), with different studies is tabulated in table 2. In our study we found origin of ILA mainly from either posterior division of IIA or from the trunk of IIA. There were no branches coming from the common iliac, external iliac or gluteal arteries as has been reported by various other authors.
Several authors have classified the origin of ILA differently. Rusu et al classified the ILA origin into different levels; Level A: ILA from the CIA. Level B: ILA from the CIA bifurcation. Level C: ILA from the main trunk of the IIA. Level D: ILA from the origin of the posterior division of the IIA. Level E: ILA from the posterior division of the IIA. In our study, type 1 corresponds to level E category whereas type 2 corresponds to level C category. The typical type 3 in which ILA was arising from single trunk with obturator Artery from posterior division did not correspond to any of the above Rusu et al levels of classification & was not reported by any other study.

In one cadaver, on both sides, it was observed that the ILA was taking the double origin from two different points, one from trunk & other from posterior division of IIA. Turan Koc et al & Amaç Kiray also reported such cases in 4 & 2 (4.8%) specimens respectively. In our study we also observed absence of ILA in 3 specimens (6%). So far very few reports have been documented on the absence of iliolumbar artery. Ravi Shankar Gadagie et al & Lipshutz et al reported the absence of IA in 8 specimens (26.67%), 5 subjects and 4.7% respectively. In case ILA was absent, it was replaced by fourth lumbar artery.

Table 2 Incidence of origin variability of the iliolumbar artery by different authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Trunk</th>
<th>Posterior Division of IIA</th>
<th>Lateral sacral artery</th>
<th>Obturator Artery</th>
<th>Superior Gluteal Artery</th>
<th>Common Iliac Artery</th>
<th>External Iliac Artery</th>
<th>From 2 Different Points</th>
<th>Absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rusu (2011)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>66.66% (16)</td>
<td>29.17% (8)</td>
<td>4.16% (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>VakhrkovichDmitry (2020)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.6% (5)</td>
<td>73.35% (22)</td>
<td>3.35% (1)</td>
<td>3.3% (1)</td>
<td>3.35% (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ravi Shankar (2018)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36.67% (11)</td>
<td>23.33% (7)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yuregir, Maria F (2018)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72% (56)</td>
<td>28% (24)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Turan Koc (2016)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>57.14% (12)</td>
<td>23.8% (6)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19.4% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wasem Al Talalwah (2014)</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>13.80% (47)</td>
<td>77.90% (264)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.70% (2)</td>
<td>2% (6)</td>
<td>0.30% (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>TaliChunuk (2013)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20% (8)</td>
<td>80% (32)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kirgi A (2010)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>71.4% (30)</td>
<td>18.8% (8)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.8% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rusu et al (2010)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>52.50% (16)</td>
<td>32.50% (10)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chen et al (2012)</td>
<td>96.30%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Present study</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38% (19)</td>
<td>52% (26)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4% (2)</td>
<td>6% (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

A detailed analysis of the ILA and its origin variability can improve our understanding of the vascular complications and complication of serious hemorrhage affecting this region. The present study is done to increase the success of diagnostic evaluation and to improve the effectiveness of surgical approaches in this region. The ILA may have distinct and important patterns that are important to identify during surgical procedures. Acute hemorrhages or postoperative hematoma may occur if the iliolumbar artery is injured during surgery. The iliolumbar artery’s anatomical variations may be significant when gathering the vascular iliac bone graft. The surgeon should keep in mind that the variant origin of ILA can make anterior lumbosacral junction exposure and posterior sacroiliac fixations, more difficult. The branching and distribution
patterns along with sexual differences can be further highlighted with future studies in a greater number of subjects.

References

14. Teli CG, Kate NN, Kothandaraman U. Morphometry of the iliolumbar artery and the iliolumbar veins and their correlations with the lumbosacral trunk and the obturator nerve. JCDR: 2013 Mar; 7(3):422.
