

Levator Veli Palatini Muscle

Ravinder Pal Singh, M.B., B.S. & S.P. Thapar, M.B., M.S., M.A.M.S.***

THE precise origin of levator veli palatini muscle receives only perfunctory mention in most of the text-books of anatomy. Eustachius (1707) is credited to be the first for having mentioned this muscle in relationship to the pharyngotympanic tube. Subsequently, the observations of Soemmering (1796), Blakeway (1914) and Rohan and Turner (1956) reveal that there is lack of unanimity with respect to its origin and relationship with the auditory tube. As such an attempt to solve this problem has been contemplated, by undertaking the dissections on 39 human temporal bones.

The following is a generalized description of the origin as seen in our specimens :

- (i) The basal surface of the petrous part of temporal bone is directed infero-medially; is quadrilateral in appearance and the area in front of the lower orifice of carotid canal is characteristically rough, pitted, semi-lunar or triangular in outline and skirts the anterior and part of the medial margin of this orifice. The muscle presents a tendinous origin, which is related to the anterior and

part of the medial circumference of the orifice and exhibits smooth, shining, glistening fibres mainly limited on its anterior aspect. However, muscular fibres can be delineated from its deeper aspect, which are intimately blended with the tendinous fibres at its origin. Its attachment is covered by a thickened fascia, which is seen dipping down into the various fissures related to the squamous and tympanic part of temporal bone.

- (ii) In none of the specimens, the origin of the muscle could be traced to the sheet of fascia which descends from the vaginal plate and forms the upper part of carotid sheath. This observation is strikingly in contrast to the findings of Rohan and Turner (1956) who have observed that the muscle arises by fleshy fibres from the fascia.
- (iii) The inferior aspect of the auditory tube is intimately related to this muscle, which appears to arise from this in the form of fleshy fibres. The muscle is intimately blended with the tube so that no cleavage plane can be demonstrated.

*Demonstrator in Anatomy, Govt. Medical College, Patiala.

**Associate Professor in Anatomy, Govt. Medical College, Patiala.

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