

One hundred twenty-five dry skulls from Kenya that consisted of about 90% Bantu individuals were examined to obtain data on the gross anatomy of the hard palate. The palatine index showed that 43.2% of the total sample of skulls has narrow (leptostaphyline), 23.7% intermediate (mesostaphyline), and 33.1% wide (brachystaphyline) palates. The palatine height index showed that 40% skulls had low (chamestaphyline), 57% intermediate (orthostaphyline), and 3.0% deep (hypsistaphyline) palates. Mean palatal length, breadth, and height for the total sample was 4.92 cm, 4.02 cm, and 1.22 cm, respectively. The incisive foramen and canal was cone shaped in 80% where the diameter of the foramen was less than 0.4 cm, while it was cylindrical in 20% where the diameter was greater than 0.4 cm. Forty-nine per cent of the skulls had two-five lesser palatine foramina present. The greater palatine foramen was found to lie at the level of the third molar in 76%, intermediate between second and third molars in 13.6%, and opposite the second molar in 10.4%. The greater palatine foramen opened antero-medially in 74% and perpendicularly in 26% of the palates. Extensive longitudinal palatal grooves were found bilaterally in all the palates, 70% showed divisions of the grooves, 63.2% had crests along the border of the grooves, and 19.2% had bridges in the posterior part of the groove near the opening of the greater palatine foramen. The incidence of palatine torus was 4.8%. The incisive suture was present in 6.4% of the adult palates.