

ABSTRACT

The position and branching of the lingual nerve (LN) in the mandibular third molar region were documented in 30 head hemi-sections (16: right and 14: left). In all the dissections, the LN was found below the level of the posterior alveolar crest (PAC). Branching was observed in 26 (86.7%) of the 30 specimen in which one branch was most frequently given per hemi-section. All branches were located superior to the main trunk of the LN. The mean vertical distance of the LN from the PAC was 10.3 ± 5.2 mm (range: 2.8 - 19.9 mm) whereas the mean antero-posterior distance was 7.1 ± 2.8 mm (range: 1.3 - 15.6 mm). The mean mandibular height from the PAC was 28.7 ± 4.0 mm (range: 23.3 - 40.7 mm). The vertical distance and mandibular height correlated positively giving a ratio of 1:2.7 between the two parameters. There was no significant difference between the two sides of the head. Position of the LN differed from previous studies suggesting that ethnicity may have a role in morphometry of the nerve. Use of different methodology may also contribute to this. Branches of the LN being closer to the PAC may be more prone to injury than the main trunk during surgical treatment.