



A STUDY OF ANATOMICAL VARIATIONS AND PRESERVATION OF SUPERIOR LARYNGEAL NERVE AND ITS BRANCHES DURING THYROID SURGERIES

**Dr. Ashfaq
Abdul Aziz Ansari**

Professor And Head Of Department Of Otorhinolaryngology.

**Dr Chintu Susan
Pallicken**

Resident, Department of Otorhinolaryngology.

ABSTRACT

Objective: To describe the anatomic variations of the SLN: specifically in relation to EBSLN and to propose a systematic approach to identification and preservation of this nerve; and to define the identification rate of this nerve during thyroidectomy and to preserve it by avoiding iatrogenic injury to the nerve. **Methods:** A observational study was performed on 60 patients. After written informed consent Patients were evaluated by detailed clinical ENT examination followed by necessary thyroid investigation, radiological investigation which will be maintained in a systematic record sheet and assessed. The variations and preservation of superior laryngeal nerve were studied during the thyroid surgeries. **Results:** Type 1 of External branch of superior laryngeal nerve is the most common type in this study.

KEYWORDS : External branch of superior laryngeal nerve, Thyroid surgery, Anatomical variations, Cernea classification.

INTRODUCTION

Most endocrine surgeons have focused on preserving the recurrent laryngeal nerve (RLN) due to its common complications (such as hoarseness, dysphagia, and aspiration) during thyroidectomy. Therefore, the clinical importance of the external branch of the superior laryngeal nerve (EBSLN) has been less emphasized and gets small consideration during thyroidectomy. However, the EBSLN innervates the cricothyroid muscle; super energetic phonation and the frequent occurrence of voice fatigue may result from damage to this nerve, which can negatively affect patient quality of life after surgery. Therefore, the importance of preserving this nerve has been greatly emphasized.¹⁻⁶

The superior laryngeal nerve (SLN) starts commonly from the vagus nerve at the level of the C2 vertebra and descends medially toward the thyrohyoid membrane (TM), the membrane between the thyroid cartilage and the hyoid bone. Its position was found to be mostly symmetrical between the right and left sides.

The SLN branches into internal and external branches deep into the internal carotid artery. The internal branch of the superior laryngeal nerve (ibSLN) passes immediately inferior to the greater horn of the hyoid bone, and approaches the TM accompanied by the superior laryngeal artery (SLA), a branch of the superior thyroid artery (STA)⁷. Both the ibSLN and the SLA pierce the external surface of the TM. ibSLN is divided into three branches. The superior branch of the ibSLN innervates the mucosa of the epiglottis and a little portion of the anterior wall of the vallecula. The middle branch is sensory, which innervates the aryepiglottic folds. The inferior branch sends a few twigs to the interarytenoid muscles. The EBSLN descends posterior to the sternothyroid muscle and the superior thyroid artery to supply the inferior constrictor and cricothyroid muscle.^{7,11}

Cernea et al¹² in 1992 randomized 76 patients into three groups based on whether the first author performed the superior thyroid pole dissection with a search for the superior laryngeal nerve with a nerve stimulator, or whether the dissection was performed without a search for the nerve.

Cernea et al.¹¹ proposed their nomenclature in 1992 and since then this has been the most extensively acknowledged classification. It categorizes the position of the EBSLN in relation to the superior pole of the thyroid or the STV, as follows:

Type 1: the nerve crosses the superior vessels more than 1 cm above a plane tangent to the edge of the superior pole;

Type 2a: it crosses the vessels within 1 cm above the upper limit of the superior pole

Type 2b: the nerve curves in its travel to the CTM below the upper edge of the superior pole. This position represents the greatest risk of injury and has been described by the author in 14% of patients with

small lobes and in 54% of patients with very large goiters.^{1,11}

With newer techniques such as minimal access thyroidectomy¹² and even transplantation of the larynx^{13,14}, identification and preservation of the EBSLN remain as relevant as ever. The SLN arises from the vagus nerve or the nodose ganglion close to the jugular foramen and descends posterior to the carotid arteries toward the larynx^{15,16}. En route the SLN crosses anterior to the superior cervical sympathetic ganglion (SCSG)/ cervical sympathetic chain (CSC) and posterior to the internal carotid artery (ICA). At this level, the SLN receives a sympathetic branch from the SCSG that contributes to the innervation of the carotid body¹⁷ and the thyroid gland¹⁸. Although many authors have mentioned this connection, only a few have described the loop in detail^{14,18}. Sun and Chang¹⁸ (1991) found 17 different variations and Furlan¹⁴ five more. Both reports found that the sympathetic chain is connected mainly to the EBSLN in 74–78% of the cases and not to the SLN trunk, as classically described in anatomy textbooks.

While there are new methods in surgical practice to identify the RLN during central neck surgery, there is no clear standard technique for the identification of the SLN. There is also less emphasis in the literature regarding the anatomical variations of the SLN, although it is important to recognize the significant anatomical variations of the SLN among the general population lead to increased vulnerability during surgical procedures of the neck.

Hence the present study was conducted with an aim to describe the anatomic variations of the SLN: specifically in relation to EBSLN and to propose a systematic approach to identify and preserve this nerve; and to define the identification rate of this nerve during thyroidectomy.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES**Aim:**

To describe the anatomic variations of the SLN: specifically in relation to EBSLN and to propose a systematic approach to identification and preservation of this nerve; and to define the identification rate of this nerve during thyroidectomy.

Objective:

To determine the anatomical variations and preservation of SLN and its branches in different thyroid swelling and to preserve it by avoiding iatrogenic injury to the nerve.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design: Observational study.

Study Period: 2 years (October 2022 to June 2024)

Study Setting: ENT department of MGM hospital, a tertiary care referral center renowned for its expertise in otorhinolaryngology. Situated in Aurangabad.

Study Subjects: Patients presenting to the outpatient department with

anterior neck swelling diagnosed to be a thyroid swelling in its euthyroid state and with no previous neck surgeries or radiations will be included in the study.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Age - 10-80years
- Sex- Both
- All patients with thyroid swelling, clinical euthyroid status.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Previous head and neck surgery
- Previous history of neck irradiation.

Sample Size:

The sample size was calculated based on the below formula.

$$n = (Z1)^2 \{P(1-P)\} / d^2$$

n : minimum sample size : 60

P: your guess of population p(any value < 1) : 0.04

1- α : confidence level set by you : 0.95

Z : z value associated with confidence : 1.96

d : absolute precision(value less than P) : 0.05

N = Population size, Z = Critical value of the normal distribution at the

required confidence level, p = Sample proportion

Hence a total of 60 cases were included in our study.

Ethical Committee Clearance:

Study was conducted after obtaining permission from institutional ethics committee.

Methodology:

- The patient were informed about the study, its purpose and its methodology and only after obtaining voluntary consent from the patient, a face-to-face interview will be carried out in local language (Hindi/Marathi) at the time of visit to the hospital.
- Patients were evaluated by detailed clinical ENT examination followed by necessary thyroid investigations, radiological investigation which will be maintained in a systematic record sheet and assessed.
- The variations and preservation of superior laryngeal nerve were studied during the thyroid surgeries.

Preoperatively:

- Detailed history.
- General & systemic examination.
- Haematological investigations (Complete blood count, Random blood sugar, Serum creatinine, Blood grouping, Thyroid function test, Serum Ionic Ca⁺⁺).
- Radiograph of the neck and chest.
- Ultrasonography of the neck.
- Fine needle aspiration cytology of the swelling.
- Pre anaesthetic evaluation.
- A written informed valid consent was taken from all patients.
- Only euthyroid patients were operated.
- direct laryngoscopy done post operative day1 and voice after 3 months



Figure 1: Kocher's incision

Intra Operatively:

- All patients were treated surgically by either total or hemi thyroidectomy.
- Patients were operated under general anesthesia.
- Parts were prepared, painted, and draped.
- Horizontal crease incision was taken 2 cms above sternal notch.
- Skin and subplatysmal flaps were elevated.
- Strap muscles were separated and dissected in midline.
- Right and / or left gland were separated.
- On either or both sides, superior pole was ligated after ligating external branch of superior laryngeal nerve and inferior pole ligated after identifying recurrent laryngeal nerve.
- Right or left hemithyroid gland with isthmus removed with ligation of stump or entire gland removed.
- Well hemostasis achieved.
- Suction drain placed in situ.
- Incision closed in layers and dressing given.



Figure 2: External Branch Of Superior Laryngeal Nerve Type 1

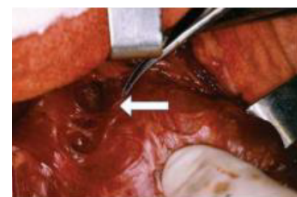


Figure 3 : Type 2b In A Patient With Large Goitre



Figure 4 : Drain Insitu



Figure 5 : Closure With Drain

Postoperatively:

- All patients were kept in wards on iv antibiotics and analgesics.
- Patients were discharged after removal of drain with oral antibiotics & analgesics.
- All patients were called on post op day 7 for removal of dressing & suture cutting & antibiotics were repeated for 1 more week.

Statistical Analysis:

- Data was collected and entered in Microsoft excel.

- Data was analysed using Epi info version 7.2 software.
- Categorical and quantitative data was expressed in number and percentages.

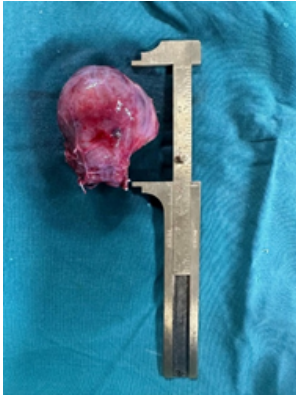


Figure 6 : Colloid Goitre

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

Table No.1 Distribution Of Cases According To Age

Age groups(in years)	Frequency	Percent
21-30	13	21.67%
31-40	14	23.33%
41-50	06	10.00%
51-60	10	16.67%
61-70	08	13.33%
71-80	09	15.00%
TOTAL	60	100.00%
Mean age	48.25±17.69	
Range	22-80	

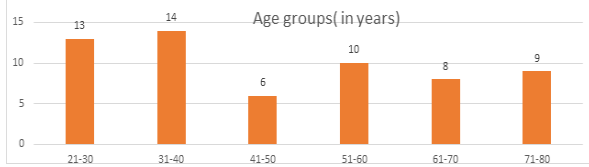


Table 1 shows distribution of cases according to age. Age groups ranging from 21-30 years and 31-40 years contribute the highest percentages at 21.67% and 23.33% respectively, while the 41-50 age group represents 10.00% of cases. The mean age of the cases is 48.25 years, with a standard deviation of 17.69. The age range spans from 22 to 80 years, showcasing the distribution across different age groups.

Table No.2 Distribution Of Cases According To Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Female	45	75.00%
Male	15	25.00%
Total	60	100.00%

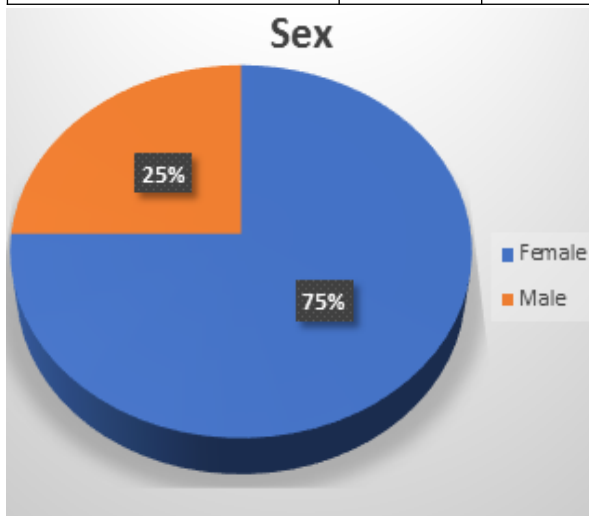


Table no.2 shows distribution of cases according to Sex. Among the total cases, 75% were female, while males accounted for 25% cases.

Table No.3 Distribution Of Cases According To Diagnosis

Diagnosis	Frequency	Percent
Right benign thyroid disease	19	31.67%
Left benign thyroid disease	18	30.00%
MNG	11	18.33%
Retrosternal goiter	01	1.67%
Thyroiditis	03	5.00%
Carcinoma	08	13.33%
TOTAL	60	100.00%

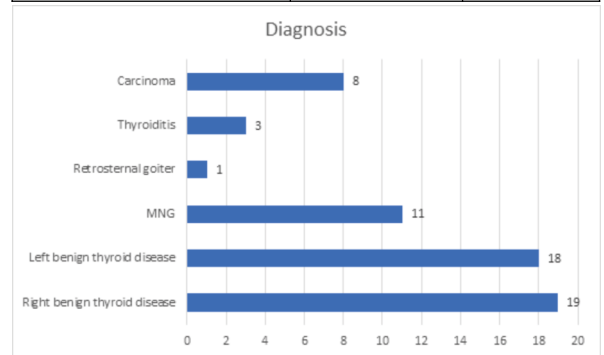


Table no.3 shows distribution of cases according to diagnosis Benign thyroid diseases, including right and left benign conditions, collectively represented 61.67% of cases. Carcinoma accounted for 13.33% of cases, indicating the presence of malignant conditions within the sample.

Table No.4 Distribution Of Cases According To Surgery Done

Surgery	Frequency
Left Hemithyroidectomy	22
Right Hemithyroidectomy	21
Total Hemithyroidectomy	17
Total	60

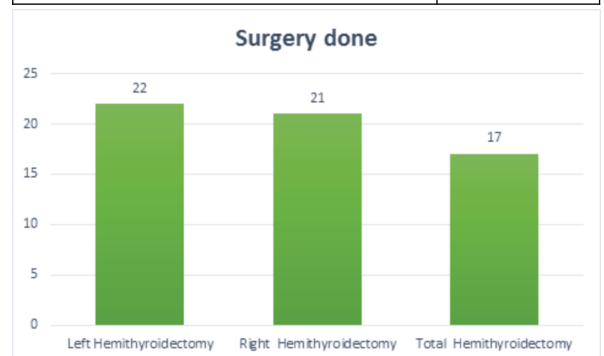


Table no.4 shows distribution of cases according to surgery done. Left Hemithyroidectomy was the most common surgery performed, accounting for 36.67% of cases, followed closely by Right Hemithyroidectomy at 35.00%. Total Hemithyroidectomy constituted 28.33% of surgeries performed.

Table No.5 Distribution Of Cases According To FNAC (Bethesda category)

FNAC(BETHESDA CATEGORY)	Frequency
1	08
2	44
3	04
4	03
5	01
Total	60

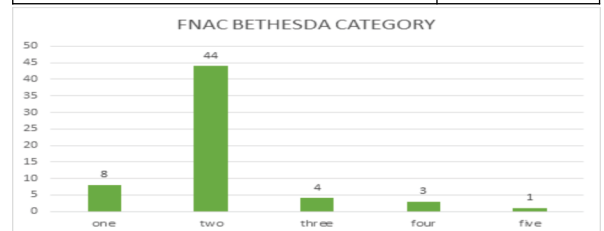


Table no.5 shows distribution of cases according to FNAC(Bethesda category).Category 2 (benign) FNAC results comprise the majority at 73.33%. Other categories, including category 1, 3, 4, and 5, represent smaller proportions of case

Table No.6 Distribution Of Cases According To Histopathological Diagnosis

Histopathological diagnosis	Frequency	Percent
Carcinoma	08	13.33%
Colloid goitre	31	51.67%
Follicular adenoma	09	15.00%
MNG	09	15.00%
Ridel's thyroiditis	03	5.00%
Total	60	100.00%

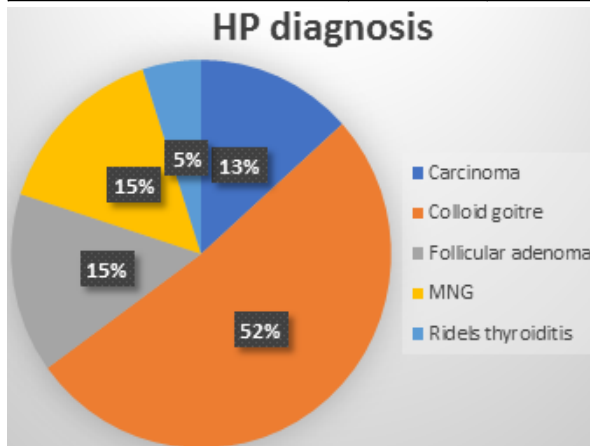


Table no.6 shows distribution of cases according to histopathological diagnosis. Colloid goitre was the most common diagnosis, accounting for 51.67% of cases. Carcinoma represented 13.33% of cases, while other diagnoses such as follicular adenoma and multinodular goitre contribute to the 15% of cases.

Table No.7 Distribution Of Cases According To Location Of External Branch Of Laryngeal Nerve(EBSLN) By Using Cernia Classification

Left EBSLN	Frequency	Percent
1	21	58.33%
2A	9	25.00%
2B	6	16.67%
Total	36	100.00%
Right EBSLN	Frequency	Percent
1	21	100.00%
Total	21	100.00%

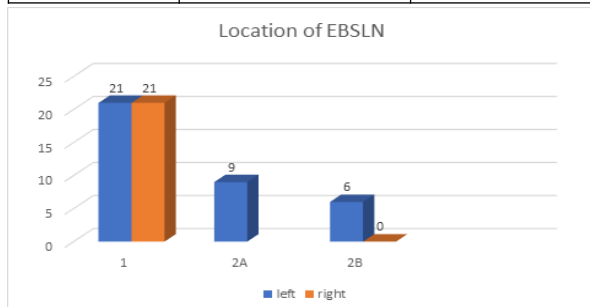


Table no.7 shows distribution of cases according to location of external branch of laryngeal nerve (EBSLN) by using Cernia classification. Left EBSLN shows varying percentages across different classifications, with category 1 being the highest at 58.33%. Right EBSLN predominantly falls under category 1, representing 100% of cases.

Table No.8 Distribution Of Cases According To Voice Quality On Direct Laryngoscopy And Post-operative Day 1,at 1 Month And At 3 Months

Voice on day 1 post op	Frequency	Percent
Good	54	90.00%
Hoarse	06	10.00%
Total	60	100.00%

Voice after 1 month	Frequency	Percent
Good	58	96.67%
Hoarse	02	3.33%
Total	60	100.00%
Voice after 3 months	Frequency	Percent
Good	60	100.00%
Total	60	100.00%
DL SCOPY on Day 1	Frequency	Percent
B/L Palsy	01	1.67%
Left Palsy	01	1.67%
Normal	58	96.66%
Total	60	100.00%

Table no.8 shows distribution of cases according to voice quality on Direct laryngoscopy and post-operative day 1, at 1 month and at 3 months. Voice quality on post-operative day 1 shows 90% with good voice and 10% hoarse. Over time, voice quality improves, with 96.67% reporting good voice at 1 month and 100% at 3 months. Laryngoscopy on day 1 revealed 96.66% with normal findings and only 3.34% exhibiting bilateral or left vocal cord palsy.

DISCUSSION

Thyroid surgery is a worldwide procedure which is performed due to various indications. Several complications arise post thyroidectomy and the quality of voice is one of the most important problems and it is looked upon. In order to preserve the voice and reduce injury to the EBSLN various approaches are used during surgery. The severity would vary according to the voice demands of the individual and is very important in professional voice users and singers. In today's world, with increasing stress on verbal communication and ever-increasing segment of professional voice users, voice has gained far more priority than in the past. Delicate and deliberate surgical technique and careful attention to the details are necessary to prevent complications during surgery. Cernia's classification is of value in identification and preservation and documentation of EBSLN during thyroidectomies in a majority of patients.

Age And Gender Incidence:

In present study, age groups ranging from 21-30 years and 31-40 years contributed the highest percentages at 21.67% and 23.33% respectively, while the 41-50 age group represents 10.00% of cases. The mean age of the cases was 48.25+ 17.69 years. The age range was 22 to 80 years.

The mean age was 37.52+12.9yrs in a study done by **Pradeep et al**²⁰. The mean age group was 31-40 years in a study done by **Ekhar et al**²¹. **Khaled et al**²² found the mean age to be 41.7 years which is lower than our study.

Female predominate in number in the present study as among the total cases, 75% were female, while males accounted for 25% cases. Hence the male to female ratio is 1:3. In a study conducted by **Pradeep et al**²⁰, the male to female ratio was 1:8. The male to female ratio was 1:6.5 in a study done by **Ekhar et al**²¹. In another study by **Athavle et al**, eight were men and 37 were women.

Diagnosis:

In our study, benign thyroid diseases, including right and left benign conditions, collectively represented 61.67% of cases. Carcinoma accounted for 13.33% of cases.

On FNAC, Category 2 (benign) FNAC results comprised the majority at 73.33%.

Kwak et al. reported the US features to be significantly associated with malignancy: solid component, hypo echogenicity, marked hypo echogenicity, micro lobulated or irregular margins, microcalcification, and taller-than-wide shape. **Richards et al.** have reported an inadequate USG guided FNAC rate of 29% in nodules ≥ 3 cm and **Kim et al.** have reported an inadequacy rate of 9.9% in nodules ≥ 4 cm.

In a study by **Ho et al.**, who analysed 541 atypia (or follicular lesion) of undetermined significance lesions, malignancy rate was 26.6–37.8%. **Fazeli et al.** reported 15.2% (42/277) and **Sheahan et al.** reported 19% (5/26) of follicular variant of papillary thyroid carcinoma as benign on FNAC.⁶³

Histopathological Diagnosis:

Colloid goitre was the most common diagnosis in our study ,

accounting for 51.67% of cases. Carcinoma was seen in 13.33% of cases, while other diagnoses such as follicular adenoma and multinodular goitre contribute to the 15% of cases.

Ekhar et al²¹ diagnosed colloid goitre in 76.67% of patients. Nodular goitre was found to be the most common histopathological diagnosis (24 out of 42 cases) in a study by **Khaled et al²²**.

Surgery Performed:

Left Hemithyroidectomy was the most common surgery performed, accounting for 36.67% of cases, followed closely by Right Hemithyroidectomy at 35.00%. Total Hemithyroidectomy constituted 28.33% of surgeries performed.

In similar study by **Athavle et al²³**, Maximum number of patients, i.e. 24 patients, underwent hemithyroidectomy. Eighteen patients underwent total thyroidectomy with/without neck dissection and the remaining three patients underwent subtotal thyroidectomy.

Cernia Classification Of Type Of EBSLN :

In our study, type 1 being the highest at 58.33%. Type 2 A was seen in 25% cases in left side. Right EBSLN predominantly falls under category type 1, representing 100% of cases.

Meticulous dissection in the region of the upper pole of the thyroid is most important for the proper identification of the EBSLN. The nerve can be identified in most cases irrespective of the pathology and size of the lesion, even malignancy usually does not interfere in the identification of the nerve. Joll's triangle (sternothyroid laryngeal triangle) is an important landmark for the identification of EBSLN.¹ It is formed laterally by the upper pole of the thyroid gland and vessels, superiorly by the attachment of the strap muscles and deep investing layer of fascia to the thyroid and medially by the midline. Its floor is cricothyroid, and its content is EBSLN.¹ It is important to positively identify the nerve as it crosses this relatively avascular space before ligating the vessels, especially in the type IIb cases, where the nerve is at risk of injury during ligation of the vessels close to the gland.⁴ Although type IIb is rare, it is most dangerous of the three, and is considered to be most 'at risk' during dissection.⁷

Table Showing Type Of EBSLN In Similar Studies

Similar studies	Type 1	Type 2A	Type 2B
Aina EN et al ⁴¹	17.30%	56%	26.7%
Ozlgedik S et al ⁷³	22.50%	60%	17.5%
Mishra AK et al ⁷⁷	28.20%	53.54%	8%
Pradeep PV et al ¹⁰⁹	70.7%	17.9%	8%
Menon et al ⁷⁹	28%	58%	9%
Hwang et al ⁸⁰	16.3%	56.5%	27.2%
Present study left side	58.33%	25%	16.67%
Present study right side	100%	-	-

In our study, type 1 nerve was the most common type found. While in other similar studies type 2a was the most common type seen.

Voice Quality Post Surgery:

In present study, voice quality on post-operative day 1 shows 90% with good voice and 10% hoarse. Over time, voice quality improves, with 96.67% reporting good voice at 1 month and 100% at 3 months. Laryngoscopy on day 1 revealed 96.66% with normal findings and only 3.34% exhibiting bilateral or left vocal cord palsy.

Stojadinovic et al²⁴ reported voice symptoms in 30% of patients at 1 week and 14% at 3 months post-op. **Kaushal et al²⁵** reported voice alteration in 23% of patients having thyroidectomy. The immediate post-operative hoarseness of voice could be due to actual injury to the

ANNEXURE VI MASTER CHART

S.NO	NAME	DOB	AGE	SEX	OP SITE	PATHOLOGY (HISTOLOGY)	T/T	DIAGNOSIS	SURGERY	TYPE 1	TYPE 2A	TYPE 2B	HO	GOOD VOICE	GOOD VOICE	GOOD VOICE	GOOD VOICE
1	SHUBA CHAVHAN	24/02/2023	15	F	RIGHT COLOID CYST	2	NO RIAL	LEFT NODULAR GOITER	LEFT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY	3A			AVAR, RT COCA	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
2	SHABANA KHAN	24/02/2024	16	F	COLOID GOITER	2	NO RIAL	LEFT NODULAR GOITER	LEFT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY	2B			COLOID NODULE	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
3	SHUBHARAJ	24/02/2024	46	F	COLOID NODULE	2	NO RIAL	RIGHT NODULAR GOITER	RIGHT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY		1		COLOID NODULE	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
4	SHABANA KHAN	24/02/2024	34	F	THYROIDITIS	2	NO RIAL	NING	TOTAL	2B	2B		COLOID NODULE	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
5	PRATIK KATHARAT	24/02/2024	30	F	COLOID GOITER	2	NO RIAL	RIGHT COLOID GOITER	RIGHT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY	2A			COLOID NODULE	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
6	SHABANA KHAN	24/02/2024	27	F	NING WITH HYPERPLASIA	2	NO RIAL	MULTI NODULAR GOITER	TOTAL		1		NING	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
7	SHUBHARAJ	24/02/2024	51	F	COLLUSION ADENOMA	2	NO RIAL	COLLUSION ADENOMA	LEFT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY	1			COLLUSION ADENOMA	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
8	SHABANA KHAN	24/02/2024	25	F	GOITER WITH CYST	1	NO RIAL	COLOID CYST	TOTAL	1	1		COLOID NODULE	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
9	SHUBA KHAN	24/02/2024	22	F	NING	2	NO RIAL	NING	TOTAL	2A	2A		MODULAR CARCINOMA	HOARSE	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
10	ANISH KHAN	24/02/2024	25	M	THYROIDITIS	4	NO RIAL	RIGHT THYROIDITIS	RIGHT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY		1		COLOID GOITER	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
11	SHABANA KHAN	24/02/2024	25	F	NING	2	NO RIAL	RIGHT THYROIDITIS	TOTAL	1	1		PAPILLARY CARCINOMA OF THYROID GLAND	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
12	SHUBHARAJ	24/02/2024	16	F	LEFT THYROID NODULE	2	NO RIAL	RIGHT THYROID NODULE	RIGHT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY		2B		COLLUSION ADENOMA	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
13	SHABANA KHAN	24/02/2024	27	F	LEFT THYROID NODULE	2	NO RIAL	RIGHT THYROID NODULE	LEFT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY	1			COLOID NODULE	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
14	SHUBHARAJ	24/02/2024	15	F	LEFT THYROID NODULE	2	NO RIAL	LEFT THYROID NODULE	LEFT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY	2A			COLLUSION ADENOMA	HOARSE	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
15	ANISH KHAN	24/02/2024	25	M	NING	2	NO RIAL	NING	LEFT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY	2B			NING WITH COLLOIDAL ADENOMA	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
16	SHABANA KHAN	24/02/2024	25	F	RIGHT COLOID CYST	2	NO RIAL	RIGHT COLOID CYST	RIGHT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY		1		COLLUSION ADENOMA	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
17	SHUBHARAJ	24/02/2024	16	F	RIGHT COLOID CYST	1	NO RIAL	RIGHT COLOID CYST	RIGHT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY		1		COLOID GOITER	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD
18	SHABANA KHAN	24/02/2024	25	F	RIGHT COLOID CYST	2	NO RIAL	RIGHT COLOID CYST	RIGHT HEMITHYROIDECTOMY	2A			NING	GOOD	NORMAL	02/03	GOOD

nerve or others causes such as laryngeal edema from intubation, division of the sternothyroid and sternothyroid muscles and disturbance of the laryngotracheal mobility which gradually recovered. **Naraynsingh et al²⁶** found hoarseness of voice in 73% of patients within 24 hrs after thyroid surgery. This could be due laryngeal edema from intubation combined with manipulation from thyroidectomy as it settled rapidly down to 11% within 1 week.⁶⁵

In a study done by **Papadakis²⁷**, no statistically significant difference was found in any voice parameter, between preoperative and 1-week postoperative assessment regarding the control groups.

In **Selvan et al¹⁰**'s study, 100% of EBSLNs were found using nerve stimulation and EMG of the cricothyroid muscle in 35 patients and 70 nerves at risk. In this study, a considerable number of false positives were seen when visual identification alone was used prior to electrical stimulation. In many cases, non-neural fibres or tendinous fibres of the cricothyroid or inferior constrictor muscles were wrongly assumed to be EBSLN but were unmasked by the lack of an action potential when stimulated. This finding suggests that visual identification of the EBSLN without EMG confirmation may likely be flawed. Nerve stimulation technique has a substantial advantage in identifying all nerve types, including Cernia type 1, which is found at a higher position and sometimes is crowded under the laryngeal head of the sternothyroid muscle, as well as descending types 2A and 2B, which are most vulnerable to surgical manipulation injury.

SUMMARY

- The age distribution revealed a diverse range, with the highest percentages in the 21-30 and 31-40 age groups. The mean age was 48.25 years, ranging from 22 to 80 years. Females comprised 75% of the case.
- Benign thyroid diseases, particularly colloid goitre, were predominant, representing 61.67% of cases. Carcinoma accounted for 13.33%, with follicular adenoma and multinodular goitre also identified.
- Left Hemithyroidectomy was the most common surgery performed, followed closely by Right Hemithyroidectomy. Total Hemithyroidectomy constituted a significant portion of surgeries.
- FNAC results predominantly fell under Category 2 (benign), comprising 73.33% of cases, indicating a prevalence of benign conditions in the sample.
- The distribution of EBSLN varied, with differing percentages across categories for left and right EBSLN with type 1 being the most common type.
- Voice quality significantly improved over time post-operation, with 90% reporting good voice on day 1, increasing to 96.67% at 1 month, and reaching 100% at 3 months. Laryngoscopy on day 1 revealed mostly normal findings.

CONCLUSION

- Type 1 was the commonest type in our study as per Cernia classification.
- Deep knowledge of the surgical anatomy of the region of the superior thyroid pole and the EBSLN is of utmost importance. Careful dissection in the area of the superior pole of the thyroid gland and individual exposure and independent ligation of the branches of the superior thyroid artery very close to the capsule of the upper thyroid pole are essential to avoid EBSLN injury.
- Exploration and identification of EBSLN may be helpful in preservation of nerve.

Limitations

Small sample size hence findings cannot be generalized.

19	ABHINAV SURESH	2:02:55:44	20	F	RIGHT COLLOID NODULE	2	NO RAL	RIGHT COLLOID NODULE	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
20	VIJAYA SATHI	2:02:55:47	21	F	THYROID DOTS	2	NO RAL	THYROIDOTS	TOTAL		ROGETHAR DOTS	HOWAS	SLY FALD	HOWAS	GOOD	
21	MAHESHWARI	2:02:55:52	22	F	TRACHEA	5	NO RAL	RIGHT THYROID NODULE	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
22	MOHID SHAIK	2:02:55:55	23	M	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	2	NO RAL	LEFT THYROID NODULE	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	HOWAS	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
23	LAKSHMI RAGHAVA	2:02:56:00	24	F	RIGHT COLLOID CYST	1	NO RAL	R GF COLLOID CYST	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID GOTSER WITH CYSTIC DEGENERATION	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
24	SURASHA RAGHAVA	2:02:56:10	25	F	HING WITH COLLOID CYST	1	NO RAL	HING WITH THYROID NODULE	TOTAL		HING	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
25	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:56:21	26	M	LEFT COLLOID NODULE	1	NO RAL	COLLOID GOTSER	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID NODULE	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
26	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:56:29	27	M	LEFT COLLOID NODULE	2	NO RAL	LEFT COLLOID NODULE	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID NODULAR GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
27	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:56:38	28	M	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	2	NO RAL	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID NODULE	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
28	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:56:45	29	F	LEFT COLLOID GOTSER	2	NO RAL	LEFT COLLOID GOTSER	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
29	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:56:52	30	F	LEFT COLLOID GOTSER	2	NO RAL	LEFT COLLOID GOTSER	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
30	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:56:59	31	F	RIGHT COLLOID CYST	2	NO RAL	R GF COLLOID CYST	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID CYST	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
31	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:57:06	32	M	LEFT THYROID NODULE	1	NO RAL	LEFT THYROID NODULE	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID NODULAR GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
32	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:57:13	33	F	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	1	NO RAL	RIGHT THYROID NODULE	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
33	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:57:20	34	F	THYROID DOTS WITH HING	2	NO RAL	THYROIDOTS WITH HING	TOTAL	2A	2A	HING	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD
34	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:57:27	35	F	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	2	NO RAL	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	TOTAL	1	1	COLLUCARACARDIONIA WITH THYROIDOTS	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD
35	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:57:34	36	F	COLLOID NODULE WITH HING	2	NO RAL	COLLOID NODULE WITH HING	TOTAL	1	1	HING	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD
36	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:57:41	37	F	MULTIPLE NODULES	4	NO RAL	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	TOTAL	2B	2B	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD
37	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:57:48	38	F	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	2	NO RAL	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
38	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:57:55	39	M	THYROID NODULE	2	NO RAL	HING WITH THYROID NODULE	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
39	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:58:02	40	F	LEFT THYROID NODULE	2	NO RAL	LEFT THYROID NODULE	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID NODULE	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
40	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:58:09	41	M	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	2	NO RAL	RIGHT COLLOID NODULE	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
41	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:58:16	42	M	LEFT COLLOID NODULE	2	NO RAL	LEFT COLLOID NODULE	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	LEFT COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
42	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:58:23	43	F	LEFT COLLOID CYSTIC NODULE	2	NO RAL	LEFT COLLOID CYSTIC NODULE	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
43	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:58:30	44	F	COLLOID THYROIDOTS	2	NO RAL	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
44	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:58:37	45	F	LEFT COLLOID CYSTIC NODULE	2	NO RAL	LEFT THYROID NODULE	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID CYST	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
45	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:58:44	46	F	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	2	NO RAL	RIGHT COLLOID CYSTIC NODULE	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
46	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:58:51	47	F	HING	2	NO RAL	HING	TOTAL	2A	2A	HING	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD
47	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:58:58	48	F	RIGHT COLLOID CYST	1	NO RAL	COLLOID CYST	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID CYST	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
48	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:05	49	F	THYROID NODULE	2	NO RAL	HING WITH THYROID NODULE	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
49	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:12	50	F	HING	2	NO RAL	HING	TOTAL	2B	2B	HING	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD
50	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:19	51	M	LEFT COLLOID GOTSER	2	NO RAL	LEFT COLLOID GOTSER	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	NO COLLOID GOTSER WITH CYSTIC CHANGES	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
51	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:26	52	F	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	2	NO RAL	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
52	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:33	53	F	HING	2	NO RAL	HING	TOTAL	1	1	HING	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD
53	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:40	54	F	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	2	NO RAL	LEFT COLLOID CYSTIC NODULE	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLUCARACARDIONIA	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
54	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:47	55	M	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	2	NO RAL	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	RIGHT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
55	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:54	56	M	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	4	NO RAL	RIGHT COLLOID GOTSER	TOTAL	1	1	BARLUPY CA	HOWAS	LEFT BALUP	HOWAS	GOOD
56	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:59	57	F	LEFT COLLOID CYST	2	NO RAL	LEFT COLLOID CYST	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
57	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:59	58	F	HING	2	NO RAL	HING	TOTAL	1	1	HING	HOWAS	LEFT BALUP	HOWAS	GOOD
58	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:59	59	F	LEFT COLLOID GOTSER	1	NO RAL	LEFT COLLOID GOTSER	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID GOTSER	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	
59	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:59	60	F	THYROID DOTS	2	NO RAL	THYROIDOTS	TOTAL	1	1	ROGETHAR DOTS	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD
60	SHASHIASHA SATHI	2:02:59:59	61	F	LEFT COLLOID CYST	2	NO RAL	LEFT COLLOID CYST	LEFT HEATHRO DUCTORY	1	COLLOID CYST	GOOD	NORMAL	00:00	GOOD	

REFERENCES

- Cerneia CR, Nishio S, Hojaji FC. Identification of the external branch of the superior laryngeal nerve (EBSLN) in large goiters. *Am J Otolaryngol*. 1995;16:307e311.
- Kierner AC, Aigner M, Burian M. The external branch of the superior laryngeal nerve: its topographical anatomy as related to surgery of the neck. *Arch Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg*. 1998;124:301e303.
- Abelson TI, Tucker HM. Laryngeal findings in superior laryngeal nerve paralysis: a controversy. *Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg*. 1981;89:463e470.
- Friedman M, LoSavio P, Ibrahim H. Superior laryngeal nerve identification and preservation in thyroidectomy. *Arch Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg*. 2002;128:296e303.
- Teitelbaum BJ, Wenig BL. Superior laryngeal nerve injury from thyroid surgery. *Head Neck*. 1995;17:36e40.
- Kochilas X, Bibas A, Xenellis J, Anagnostopoulou S. Surgical anatomy of the external branch of the superior laryngeal nerve and its clinical significance in head and neck surgery. *Clin Anat*. 2008;21:99e105.
- Gray H, Williams PL, Bannister LH. *Gray's Anatomy: The Anatomical Basis of Medicine and Surgery*. 38th ed. New York: Churchill Livingstone; 1995.
- Inabnet WB, Murry T, Dhimas S, Aviv J, Lifante JC. Neuromonitoring of the external branch of the superior laryngeal nerve during minimally invasive thyroid surgery under local anesthesia: a prospective study of 10 patients. *Laryngoscope*. 2009;119:597e601.
- Dionigi G, Boni L, Rovera F, Bacuzzi A, Dionigi R. Neuromonitoring and video-assisted thyroidectomy: a prospective, randomized case-control evaluation. *Surg Endosc*. 2009;23:996e1003.
- Selvan B, Babu S, Paul MJ, Abraham D, Samuel P, Nair A. Mapping the compound muscle action potentials of cricothyroid muscle using electromyography in thyroid operations: a novel method to clinically type the external branch of the superior laryngeal nerve. *Ann Surg*. 2009;250:293e300.
- Cerneia CR, Ferraz AR, Fulani J, Monkio S, Nishio S, Hojaji FC, et al. Identification of the external branch of the superior laryngeal nerve during thyroidectomy. *Am J Surg*. 1992;164:634-63.
- Dedivitis RA, Guimaraes AV. 2005. Identification of the external branch of the superior laryngeal nerve during minimally invasive video-assisted thyroidectomy. *Rev Bras Otorrinolaringol (Engl Ed)* 71:326-328.
- Lorenz RR, Hicks DM, Shields RW Jr, Fritz MA, Strome M. 2004. Laryngeal nerve function after total laryngeal transplantation. *Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg* 131:1016-1018.
- Birchall MA, Lorenz RR, Berke GS, Genden EM, Haughey BH, Siemionow M, Strome M. 2006. Laryngeal transplantation in 2005: A review. *Am J Transplant* 6:20-26.
- Kambic V, Zargi M, Radsel Z. 1984. Topographic anatomy of the external branch of the superior laryngeal nerve. Its importance in head and neck surgery. *J Laryngol Otol* 98:1121-1124.
- Furlan JC, de Magalhaes RP, de Aguiar ET, Shiroma S. 2002. Localization of the superior laryngeal nerve during carotid endarterectomy. *Surg Radiol Anat* 24:190-193.
- Monfred A, Gorti G, Kim D. 2002. Microsurgical anatomy of the laryngeal nerves as related to thyroid surgery. *Laryngoscope* 112:386-392.
- Sun SQ, Chang RW. 1991. The superior laryngeal nerve loop and its surgical implications. *Surg Radiol Anat* 13:175-180.
- Nilsson, M. and Fagman, H. Development of the thyroid gland. The Company o Biologists Ltd. Development. 2017;144:2123-2140.
- P.V. Pradeep, B. Jayashree, Skandha s. Harshita A Closer Look at Laryngeal Nerves during Thyroid Surgery: A Descriptive Study of 584 Nerves, *Anatomy Research International Volume*. 2012, Article ID 490390.
- Vipin Ekhar, Ramkumar V., Ritesh Shelkar, Akshay Sarode, Identification of external branch of the superior laryngeal nerve in thyroid surgery: a prospective study. *International Journal of Otorhinolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery*, 2018;4(1):228-232.
- A O Khaled, M Irfan, A Baharudin, H Shahid, Comparing morbidity of external laryngeal nerve injury in thyroid surgery with and without identifying the nerve using intraoperative neuromonitoring. *Med J Malaysia*. June 2012; 67(3).
- Poorva K Athavale, Bhagyashree D Bokare, Vipin R Ekhar, Devendra Meghraj Mahore. Identification and Preservation of External Branch of Superior Laryngeal Nerve in Thyroidectomy. *International Journal of Phonosurgery and Laryngology*. 2013;3(2):39-41.
- Stojadinovic A, Shaha AR, Orlikoff RF, Nissam A, Kornak MF, Singh B, Boyle JO, Shah JP, Brennan MF, Kraus DH. Prospective functional voice assessment with patients undergoing thyroid surgery. *Ann Surg*. 2002 ;236(6):823-32.
- Manish K., Anjali M., Saroj K.M. Thyroid surgery and voice-related outcomes. *AN2 J. Surg*. 2001;71:611.
- Naraynsingh V, Cawich S, Hassranah D, Maharaj R, Islam S, Singh Y. Retrograde Thyroidectomy for preservation of the External Branch of the Superior Laryngeal Nerve: A case series. *Int J Surg Case Rep*. 2018;53:517-521.
- Chariton E, Papadakis, Panagioti Asimakopoulou, Efklidis Proimos, George Perogramvakis, Effrosyni Papoutsakis, Theognosia Chimona. *Journal of Voice*. 2017; 31(4):515.
- Mishra AK, Temadari H, Singh N, Mishra SK, Agarwal A. The external laryngeal nerve in thyroid surgery: the 'no more neglected' nerve. *Indian J Med Sci* 2007;61:3-8.