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Supernumerary abducens nerves: a comprehensive review

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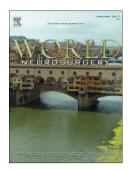
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Abstract

Branching and/or replication of the abducens nerve is not an uncommon occurrence. While numerous variations have been documented, the rarest forms are duplicated or triplicated nerves, where multiple nerve roots originate from the brain stem, travel intracranially and attach to the lateral rectus as separate entities. Herein, we will review the literature on variations found, discuss current hypotheses and clinical relevance, and propose future studies. Neurosurgeons should be aware of such nerve variants when viewing imaging or operating in the regions traversed by the abducens nerve.

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