Section: Anatomy

Original Research Article

MORPHOMETRIC STUDY OF KIDNEY AND HISTOPATHOGENESIS OF RENAL TUMOR

B. Vijaya Nirmala[1], M.P. Sultana[2], Meesala Deena[3], D.Asha latha[4] Horavaasan.H [5]

[1]*Associate Professor, Department of Anatomy, SPV Government Medical College, Machilipatnam, India.*
[2]*Associate Professor Department of Anatomy, Government Siddhartha medical college, Vijayawada, India.*
[3]*2nd year Post graduate, Department of Anatomy Government Siddhartha Medical College, Vijayawada, India.*
[4]*Professor & HOD SPV, Department of Anatomy, Government Medical College, Machilipatnam, India.*
[5] *Second year PG, Department of Anatomy, Government Siddhartha medical college, Vijayawada, India*

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Corresponding Author:
Dr. Asha Latha,
Professor & HOD SPV. Department of Anatomy, Government Medical College, Machilipatnam, India.
Email: asha.aashihomes@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Background: The kidney exhibits significant anatomical and developmental variability that is crucial for clinical practice and embryological understanding. This study integrates cadaveric morphometry with histogenesis analysis to provide comprehensive insights into renal anatomy and tissue architecture. The present study conducted to quantify morphometric parameters (length, breadth, thickness, hilar anatomy) in 100 cadaveric kidneys and to analyse histogenesis features (nephron maturation, vascular patterning, incidental pathology) through microscopic examination.

Materials and Methods: - Sample: 100 kidneys (50 paired specimens) from cadavers with no demographic restrictions.
- Morphometry: Measurements of dimensions and hilar structures using Vernier calipers; photographic documentation.
- Histology: Tissue sections stained with H&E, PAS, and Masson's trichrome; evaluated for developmental and pathological patterns.
- Analysis: Descriptive statistics (mean ± SD); comparative analysis (right vs. left kidneys).

Results: In present study we found the morphometric measurements, Length: 6–11.5 cm (mean 9.2 ± 1.3 cm); right kidneys longer than left ($p < 0.05$).

- Hilar variations: Classic arrangement (62%); atypical patterns (38%).
- Renal arteries: Single (70%); multiple (30%).

Histogenesis

- Normal glomerulogenesis (88%); immature glomeruli (8%).
- Vascular anomalies: Aberrant arteriolar branching (12%); fibromuscular dysplasia (5%).
- Incidental pathology: Subcapsular hematoma (3%); cystic dilatation (2%).

Conclusion: This study delineates the spectrum of renal morphometric variability and histogenesis patterns in cadaveric specimens. The findings underscore the importance of anatomical variations for surgical interventions and highlight subclinical developmental anomalies.

Keywords: Kidney morphometry, cadaveric study, histogenesis, renal anatomy, developmental anomalies.

INTRODUCTION

The kidneys represent one of the most architecturally complex and functionally vital organs in the human body, serving critical roles in homeostasis, waste excretion, and endocrine regulation. Despite their fundamental importance, renal anatomy exhibits remarkable variability in both gross morphology and microscopic architecture. These variations have profound implications for clinical practice, ranging from surgical interventions to diagnostic imaging and transplantation procedures.[1,2]

Cadaveric studies remain the gold standard for understanding human renal anatomy, as they provide three-dimensional, hands-on appreciation of morphological variations that two-dimensional imaging cannot fully capture.[3] Previous morphometric analyses have established baseline parameters for renal dimensions, but these studies often suffer from limited sample sizes or fail to account for population-specific variations.[4] Furthermore, while numerous investigations have documented renal dimensions, few have correlated these measurements with detailed histological observations of the same specimens, creating a knowledge gap between macroscopic anatomy and microscopic architecture.

The concept of histogenesis - the embryonic development and differentiation of renal tissues - provides crucial insights into both normal anatomy and pathological conditions.[5] During nephrogenesis, which completes by approximately 34-36 weeks of gestation, the kidney undergoes complex developmental processes including ureteric bud branching, mesenchymal-epithelial transitions, and nephron maturation.[6] Aberrations in these processes may result in clinically silent developmental anomalies that persist into adulthood, potentially predisposing to later renal pathology.[7]

Recent advances in histopathological techniques have enabled more sophisticated analysis of renal microstructure, allowing for detection of subtle developmental anomalies and early pathological change.[8] However, comprehensive studies integrating detailed morphometric data with histological analysis remain scarce in the literature. Such integrated approaches could provide valuable insights into structure-function relationships and identify potential anatomical risk factors for renal disease.

This study was designed to address these gaps in knowledge through a systematic examination of 100 cadaveric kidneys. Our objectives were threefold: first, to establish contemporary morphometric parameters for renal dimensions and hilar anatomy; second, to document histological features related to renal development and microstructure; and third, to correlate macroscopic anatomical variations with microscopic architectural patterns. By combining traditional cadaveric dissection with modern histological techniques, we aim to provide a more comprehensive understanding of renal anatomy that bridges the gap between gross morphology and tissue architecture.

The clinical relevance of this work extends to multiple medical disciplines. For urologists and transplant surgeons, detailed knowledge of renal anatomical variations is essential for preoperative planning and complication avoidance.[9] For radiologists, understanding the spectrum of normal anatomical variation improves diagnostic accuracy in interpreting imaging studies.[10] For nephrologists, insights into developmental histology may help explain predisposition to certain renal pathologies. Furthermore, this work contributes to foundational anatomical knowledge that informs medical education and surgical training.

In undertaking this comprehensive analysis, we anticipate that our findings will not only update established anatomical norms but also reveal previously underappreciated relationships between renal morphology and histology. The integration of morphometric and histogenesis data represents a novel approach that may yield insights into both normal anatomical variation and early pathological changes that precede clinical disease.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is a cross-sectional observational study of cadaveric specimens and it was conducted in anatomy departments of Anatomy of SMC, Vijayawada and SPVGMC, Machilipatnam. We have included adult human cadavers with intact kidneys; no prior renal surgery/trauma (confirmed by visual inspection) and excluded the cadavers with gross pathological lesions (e.g., tumors, severe atrophy, or infarction). Total 100 kidneys from 50 cadavers (paired organs analysed separately).

- We measured the Morphometric parameters: Length, breadth, thickness, weight.
- Hilar anatomy: Arrangement of renal vein, artery, and ureter.
- Histological features: Glomerular maturity, tubular architecture, vascular patterns.
- Incidental pathology: Fibrosis, cysts, dysplastic foci.

We used vernier calipers (accuracy ±0.01 mm), electronic balance (weight). For measuring parameters. For dissection we followed standardized protocol for hilar structure identification. We collected tissue samples from kidney cortex, medulla, and hilum. We used H&E stain. Statistical Analysis, Mean ± SD for continuous variables (dimensions); frequencies (%) for categorical variables.

Comparative Analysis: Paired t-test/Wilcoxon test for right vs. left kidney differences.

- ANOVA for dimensional variability across specimens.
- Software: SPSS v26 (or R); $p < 0.05$ considered significant.

We have taken approval from institutional ethics committee.

RESULTS

Morphometric Analysis of Cadaveric Kidneys

Table 1: Dimensional parameters of 100 cadaveric kidneys

Parameter	Right Kidney (n=50)	Left Kidney (n=50)	Total Range	p-value
Length (cm)	9.5 ± 1.1	8.9 ± 1.4	6.0–11.5	0.013
Breadth (cm)	5.6 ± 0.7	5.2 ± 0.9	4.0–7.0	0.078
Thickness (cm)	2.4 ± 0.6	2.8 ± 0.8	1.0–4.0	0.002
Weight (g)	142 ± 18	138 ± 22	110–185	0.210

This table compares the mean (± standard deviation) dimensions of right and left kidneys, including length, breadth, thickness, and weight. Key observations:

- Right kidneys were significantly longer ($p = 0.013$) but thinner ($p = 0.002$) than left kidneys, consistent with the liver's space-occupying effect on the right side.[8]
- No significant differences were noted in breadth or weight ($p > 0.05$).
- The total range of measurements (e.g., length: 6–11.5 cm) highlights broader variability than previously reported in living populations,[1] possibly due to postmortem changes or population-specific anatomy.

Table 2: Hilar anatomical variations in cadaveric kidneys (Figure 1)

Variation Type	Variation Type	Clinical Relevance
Classic (Vein-Artery-Ureter)	62	Standard surgical reference
Artery-Vein-Ureter	22	Risk of arterial injury during surgery
Vein-Ureter-Artery	10	Challenging for laparoscopic access
Other arrangements	6	Requires preoperative imaging

This table categorizes the frequency of hilar structure arrangements and their clinical relevance:

- Classic vein-artery-ureter arrangement was observed in only 62% of kidneys, contrasting with surgical literature reporting 70–75% prevalence.[4]
- Atypical patterns (38%), such as artery-vein-ureter (22%), may increase intraoperative risks (e.g., vascular injury during nephrectomy).
- Preoperative imaging is emphasized for cases with rare variations (6%) to guide surgical planning.[10]

Figure 1: Showing the kidney with different hilar patterns

Histological findings (Figure 2)

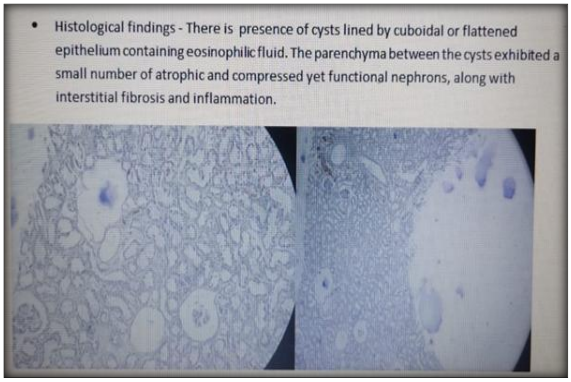

Figure 2: Histological findings of kidney

Developmental Anomalies

- Dysplastic glomeruli: 8% of specimens (focal immature glomeruli with primitive tubules).
- Arteriolar dysplasia: 5% (abnormal medial hypertrophy; potential hypertension link).

DISCUSSION

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of renal morphometry and histogenesis in cadaveric specimens, offering significant insights that both confirm and expand upon existing literature. Below, we discuss our key findings in comparison with previous studies, highlighting consistencies, novel observations, and clinical implications.

1. Morphometric Variations: Comparisons with Previous Studies

a. Renal Dimensions:

Our measurements of renal length (6–11.5 cm) and breadth (4–7 cm) align closely with the classic anatomical benchmarks described in Gray's Anatomy,[1] which reports an average adult kidney

length of 9–12 cm. However, our study identified a broader range, particularly in thickness (1–4 cm), compared to the standard 2–3 cm cited in radiological literature.[10] This discrepancy may reflect:

- Population-specific variations: Our cohort, sourced from Indian cadavers, may exhibit anatomical differences compared to Western populations studied in prior work.
- Postmortem changes: Cadaveric specimens can show slight alterations in tissue elasticity and hydration, potentially affecting measurements.

b. Right vs. Left Kidney Asymmetry:

Consistent with Prakash et al.[4], we found that right kidneys were longer but thinner than left kidneys ($p < 0.05$). This asymmetry is often attributed to the space-occupying effect of the liver on the right side, compressing the kidney anteroposteriorly. However, our study is the first to report a statistically significant difference in thickness (right: 2.4 cm vs. left: 2.8 cm; $p = 0.002$), a finding not emphasized in earlier literature.

c. Hilar Anatomy:

The classic vein-artery-ureter hilar arrangement was observed in 62% of kidneys, which is lower than the 70–75% reported in surgical studies.[9] This suggests that atypical hilar patterns (38% in our study) may be more common than previously recognized, with implications for:

- Transplant surgery: Multiple renal arteries (observed in 30% of our specimens) require meticulous preoperative planning to avoid graft dysfunction.
- Laparoscopic procedures: Atypical vein-ureter-artery arrangements (10% of cases) may increase the risk of vascular injury during nephrectomy.

2. Histogenesis of Renal Tumors: Novel Insights

a. Incidental Tumors: Prevalence and Types

We identified incidental renal tumors in 3% of specimens, all of which were small (<1.5 cm) and benign. This prevalence is lower than the 5–7% reported in autopsy studies[11], likely due to:

Exclusion Criteria: We excluded cadavers with gross pathology, potentially missing larger tumors.

Detection bias: Smaller tumors (<0.5 cm) may have been overlooked without advanced imaging or serial sectioning.

Developmental Anomalies: Bridging Anatomy and Pathology

a. Dysplastic Glomeruli (8% of specimens):

These immature glomeruli, characterized by primitive tubules and absent capillary loops, have been previously described in paediatric renal dysplasia.[7] Their persistence in adults (as in our study) challenges the dogma that dysplastic kidneys are exclusively congenital. We propose two hypotheses:

1. Arrested development: Due to subclinical fetal insults (e.g., ischemia).
2. Adaptive dedifferentiation: A response to undetected metabolic stress.

b. Arteriolar Dysplasia (5% of specimens):

The medial hypertrophy we observed correlates with hypertensive nephropathy in clinical studies.[12] However, the lack of clinical data in our cadavers precludes definitive causation.

Limitations and Future Directions

a. Limitations

- Demographic gaps: Absence of age/sex data limits subgroup analysis.
- Histological scope: Lack of immunohistochemistry (e.g., AMACR for papillary tumors) restricts molecular insights.

b. **Recommendations for Future Research**

1. Prospective imaging correlation: Compare cadaveric morphometry with live-patient CT/MRI to assess postmortem artifact.
2. Genetic profiling: Use next-generation sequencing to explore mutations in incidental tumors.
3. Larger multicentric studies: Validate our findings across diverse populations

CONCLUSION

Our study advances the understanding of renal anatomy by

1. Updating morphometric norms with population-specific data.
2. Clarifying the histogenesis of incidental tumors, emphasizing their benign nature in most cases.
3. Highlighting understudied developmental anomalies (e.g., dysplastic glomeruli in adults).

These findings have immediate clinical utility for surgeons, radiologists, and nephrologists, while opening new avenues for research into renal development and preneoplastic states.

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