

**THE ROLE OF THE SUPERIOR HEAD OF LATERAL  
PTERYGOID MUSCLE IN DISC DISPLACEMENT OF THE  
TEMPOROMANDIBULAR JOINT**

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***ABSTRACT :***

The superior head of lateral pterygoid muscle has been implicated as one of the main causative factors of the antromedial displacement of the temporomandibular joint disc .This study was designed to investigate the site of lateral pterygoid muscle insertion into the temporomandibular joint disc and the relationship between that attachment and disc displacement .Magnetic resonance images of 15 temporomandibular joints of 11 patients with anterior disc displacement were taken in the sagittal plan using T1 and T2 weighted images .The images were analyzed three times with an interval of one week between each interpretation .

The results were 4 out of 12 joints with insertion of the superior head of the lateral pterygoid muscle in both disc and condylar fovea had non-reducible disc displacement .On the other hand, 1 )one (out of the 3 joints with insertion directly into the disc had irreducible disc .Based on our observations, these results show that the superior head of the lateral pterygoid muscle has higher tendency for insertion into both the condylar fovea and the disc rather than insertion into the disc only . Furthermore, the role of the superior head of the lateral pterygoid muscle in disc displacement is deemphasized .