

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32

*Running title:*

TYPE OF ARTICLE

Categorize your article in one of the following types:

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Title

Horizontal lateral lamella as a risk factor for iatrogenic cerebrospinal fluid leak. Clinical retrospective evaluation of 24 cases.

Authors

Preti A<sup>1,2</sup>, Mozzanica F<sup>1</sup>, Gera R<sup>1</sup>, Gallo S<sup>2</sup>, Zocchi J<sup>2</sup>, Bandi F<sup>2</sup>, Guidugli G<sup>1</sup>, Ambrogi F<sup>1</sup>, Yakirevitch A<sup>3</sup>, Schindler A<sup>4</sup>, Dragonetti A<sup>5</sup>, Castelnovo P<sup>6</sup>, Ottaviani F<sup>1</sup>

Affiliation

1. Department of Biomedical and Clinical Sciences, University of Milan, Milan, Italy
2. Department of Biotechnology and Life Sciences, University of Insubria, Varese, Italy
3. Department of Otorhinolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery, Sheba Medical Center and Sackler School of Medicine, Tel Aviv University, Israel
4. Department of Biochemical and Clinical science “Luigi Sacco”, University of Milan, Milan, Italy
5. Department of Otolaryngology, Ospedale Niguarda, Milan, Italy

1 SUMMARY

2 **Background:** Several authors highlighted the limitations of the Keros classification  
3 system in predicting intracranial entry risk. Recently, our group proposed a new  
4 classification system based on the angle formed between the lateral lamella of the  
5 cribriform plate (LLCP) and the continuation of an horizontal plane passing through  
6 the cribriform plate (Gera classification). The aim of this study was to analyze  
7 whether the risk of iatrogenic cerebrospinal fluid leak (CSF-L) was better predicted  
8 by Keros or Gera classification.

9 **Methodology:** The pre-operative CT scans of 24 patients (CSF-L group) who suffered  
10 from iatrogenic CSF-L during endoscopic sinus surgery (ESS) were compared to  
11 those obtained from a group of 100 patients who underwent uneventful ESS (control  
12 group). The skull base measurements as well as the distribution of Keros and Gera  
13 classes in the 2 groups were analyzed.

14 **Results:** No difference in the distribution of Keros classes or in the depth of the  
15 cribriform plate between CSF-L and control group were demonstrated. On the  
16 contrary, significant differences in the distribution of Gera classes and in the degree  
17 of the angle formed by the LLCP and the continuation of the horizontal plane passing  
18 through the cribriform plate were found. In particular, according to Gera  
19 classification system, 19 out of 24 patients in the CSF-L group were considered at  
20 risk for iatrogenic CSF-L.

21 **Conclusions:** Gera classification system might be more sensitive to anatomical  
22 variations associated with CSF-L than the Keros' one, further suggesting the  
23 application of the former during the preoperative CT scan evaluation.

24  
25 *Key words:* CSF leak, radiology, surgery, anatomy, skull base  
26  
27  
28

1 INTRODUCTION

2 Increasing of the surgical expertise and technological advances in instrumentations, as  
3 well as a deeper anatomical knowledge, have significantly reduced the rate of  
4 complications during endoscopic sinus surgery (ESS). Nonetheless, cerebrospinal  
5 fluid leak (CSF-L) still represents a possible complication of ESS<sup>(1)</sup>. In the majority of  
6 the cases, CSF-L occur during ethmoidectomy and might be related to anatomical  
7 variations of the anterior skull base<sup>(2,3)</sup>, here composed by the cribriform plate and by  
8 the fovea ethmoidalis (**the most anterosuperior part of the anterior ethmoidal roof**  
9 **included between the anterior ethmoidal artery and the posterior border of the**  
10 **frontal recess**). These structures converge at the lateral lamella of the cribriform plate  
11 (LLCP). The latter delimits laterally the cribriform groove and represents the thinnest  
12 and the most vulnerable structure of the anterior skull base as its thickness can be only  
13 0.05 mm<sup>(2,4)</sup>. For this reason, the LLCPC is the most frequent site of iatrogenic skull-  
14 base injury due to direct penetration or fracture during middle turbinate manipulation  
15 or lack of awareness of instrument placement<sup>(4)</sup>. **If not promptly identified and**  
16 **treated this complication can lead to serious neurologic sequelae**<sup>(5)</sup>.

17 Several authors suggested that the risk of iatrogenic LLCPC injury increases with the  
18 olfactory cleft depth<sup>(6-7)</sup>. For this reason, the classification proposed in 1962 by  
19 Keros<sup>(8)</sup> is still the most commonly used today to estimate the risk of iatrogenic CSF-  
20 L. It distinguishes between 3 types of cribriform fossa depending on its depth  
21 measured on computed tomography (CT) images: type 1, 1-3 mm, type 2, 4-7 mm and  
22 type 3, more than 7 mm. Patients with Keros type 3 are supposed to have a greater  
23 risk of intracranial entry since the more pronounced depth of the cribriform cleft and  
24 the thinness of its bony wall make this area more susceptible to iatrogenic injuries<sup>(2,7)</sup>.  
25 Even though widely used, several authors highlighted the limitations of this  
26 classification system in fully describing the shape of the skull base and predicting the  
27 intracranial entry risk<sup>(6,9-13)</sup>. Recently, our group proposed a new classification system  
28 of the anterior skull base anatomy based on the angle formed between the LLCPC and  
29 the lateral extension of an horizontal plane passing through the cribriform plate (Gera  
30 classification). In particular, the angle was classified into class I (> 80 degrees, low  
31 risk), class II (45 to 80 degrees, medium risk), and class III (< 45 degrees, high risk)  
32 according to the theoretical risk of iatrogenic injuries<sup>(2)</sup>. **We have previously**  
33 **observed** that the angulation of the LLCPC, by affecting the height of the ethmoidal  
34 roof relative to the cribriform plate<sup>(14)</sup>, can be a major risk factor of iatrogenic injuries  
35 during the dissection of the anterior ethmoidal cells and the frontal recess. During  
36 these surgical steps the instruments are in close proximity to the LLCPC, thus it is  
37 possible that a more pronounced ethmoidal roof slope may predispose to inadvertent  
38 skull base violation<sup>(2)</sup>.

39 In order to evaluate the clinical implications of Gera classification system, we  
40 retrospectively analyzed the preoperative CT scans of patients with chronic  
41 rhinosinusitis (CRS) who suffered from intraoperative iatrogenic CSF-L. The  
42 underlying hypothesis is that patients who experienced an intraoperative CSF-L  
43 would fall more frequently into class III (high risk of iatrogenic injuries) according to  
44 Gera classification. The importance of this study lies in the fact that the availability of  
45 a classification system able to recognize the anatomical variations predisposing to  
46 iatrogenic CSF-L may allow a more accurate interpretation of the preoperative CT  
47 findings and, thus, be of further help in preventing major surgical complications.

48  
49  
50

## 1 MATERIALS AND METHODS

2 **In this retrospective study the iatrogenic complications of a total of 6023 ESS**  
3 **procedures for CRS, performed in 4 different rhinologic centers in the period**  
4 **between January 2012 and January 2016, were analyzed. The surgeries were**  
5 **performed by 6 surgeons with an experience of more than 10 years. Among the**  
6 **6023 patients who underwent ESS, 24 suffered from iatrogenic CSF-L due to**  
7 **LLCP injury.** The study was conducted according to the declaration of Helsinki and  
8 was previously approved by the Institutional Review Boards of the enrolled hospitals.  
9 The preoperative sinus CT scans of the patients with CSF-L were evaluated (CSF-L  
10 group). In addition, a total of 100 preoperative sinus CT scans (25 for each of the  
11 enrolled rhinologic centers) of randomly selected CRS patients who underwent  
12 uneventful ESS (performed by the same surgeons in the same period) were also  
13 evaluated (control group).

14 Patients younger than 18 years, with previous trauma, sinonasal tumor, congenital  
15 facial malformations or skull base defects were excluded. In addition, none of the  
16 patients had been previously treated with any kind of sinonasal surgery.

### 17 *CT measurements*

18 All CT scans were performed on high-speed spiral CT scanners using non-contrast  
19 axial 1.5-mm sections. Scans that deviated from a true coronal plane by more than 5°  
20 from the perpendicular plane of the floor of the nose were also excluded. The  
21 morphological evaluation was performed on high-resolution coronal and sagittal  
22 sections using a specialized computer software, the Picture Archiving and  
23 Communication System (PACS)<sup>(15)</sup>.

24 Similarly to our previous study<sup>(2)</sup> two skull base measurements were assessed. Both  
25 were taken, using a 3-D multi-planar reconstruction (MPR), at the convergence  
26 between the LLCP and the most antero-superior part of the anterior ethmoidal roof<sup>(16)</sup>  
27 on the coronal plane and at the level of the posterior margin of frontal recess on the  
28 sagittal plane (see Figure 1). This point was selected because it is well identifiable and  
29 represents an important landmark for ethmoidal dissection and during the approaches  
30 to the frontal sinus. In addition, our previous study demonstrated that both intra- and  
31 inter-rater reliability for measurements taken in this point were high, suggesting a  
32 good reproducibility<sup>(2)</sup>.

33 In particular, we measured the:

- 34 • Depth of the cribriform plate: measured as the vertical height of the olfactory  
35 cleft in the coronal plane on each side (see Figure 2). The depth was defined as  
36 type 1 (1-3 mm depth), type 2 (4-7 mm depth) or type 3 (more than 7 mm  
37 depth), according to Keros classification system.
- 38 • Degree of the angle formed by the LLCP and the continuation of the horizontal  
39 plane passing through the cribriform plate (see Figure 3). According to Gera  
40 system<sup>(2)</sup>, the angle was classified depending on its degree and on the  
41 hypothetical risk of iatrogenic injuries as class I (> 80 degrees, low risk), class  
42 II (45 to 80 degrees, medium risk) or class III (< 45 degrees, high risk).

### 43 *Statistical analysis*

44 The results of skull base measurements obtained in the CSF-L group were analyzed  
45 using Mann-Whitney and Fisher test (for continuous and categorical data  
46 respectively) in order to evaluate the presence of significant differences related to the  
47 side of CSF-L. In addition, the results obtained in the CSF-L group were compared to  
48 those obtained in the control group using the Fisher and Mann-Whitney tests when  
49  
50

1 appropriate. Finally, the sensitivity, specificity, positive and negative predictive value  
2 for both Keros and Gera classification systems in the identification of patients at risk  
3 for developing intraoperative CSF-L were assessed. For this purpose, the  
4 classification systems were dichotomized in order to identify patients at high risk  
5 (class III for Gera and type 3 for Keros classification system, respectively) and at  
6 lower risk (class I and II for Gera and type 1 and 2 for Keros classification system,  
7 respectively).  
8  
9  
10

## 1 RESULTS

2 **The percentage of iatrogenic CSF-L at the level of the LLCP in our sample was**  
3 **0,398%**. A total of 124 preoperative sinus CT scans (24 for the CSF-L group and 100  
4 for the control one) were retrospectively analyzed. The mean age of patients in CSF-L  
5 group was  $53.5 \pm 6.9$  years (range 25-74) and  $50.8 \pm 7.1$  (range 21-71) in the control  
6 group. The difference was not significant on Mann-Whitney test ( $p = 0.387$ ). Male to  
7 female ratio was 16:8 in the CSF-L group and 73:27 in the control group without  
8 significant difference between the two groups according to Fisher test ( $p = 0.532$ ).  
9 Right and left iatrogenic injuries occurred equally in 12 cases on each side. There  
10 were no cases of bilateral CSF-L. **Crista galli was perpendicular to the midline in**  
11 **all the patients in CSF-L group**. Data on skull base measurements obtained in CSF-  
12 L and control group are summarized in Table 1 and 2.

### 13 14 *Depth of the cribriform plate*

15 In the CSF-L group the mean depth of the cribriform plate was  $4.3 \pm 1.7$  mm at CSF-  
16 L side and  $4.5 \pm 1.6$  mm at the contralateral one. This difference was found not  
17 significant on Mann-Whitney test ( $p = 0.802$ ). The most common anatomical  
18 variation was Keros type 2 both in CSF-L and contralateral side (13 patients, 54.2%,  
19 and 15 patients, 62.5% respectively). These differences were found not significant on  
20 Fisher test ( $p = 0.545$ ).

21 In the control group the mean depth of the cribriform plate was  $5.2 \pm 1.7$  mm at the  
22 right side and  $5.5 \pm 1.6$  mm at the left side. This difference was found not significant  
23 on Mann-Whitney test ( $p = 0.839$ ). The most common anatomical variation both in  
24 the right and left side was Keros type 2 (61 patients, 61%, and 59 patients, 59%  
25 respectively). These differences were found not significant on Fisher test ( $p = 0.497$ ).  
26 No significant differences in the depth of the cribriform or in the distribution of Keros  
27 classes were demonstrated at Mann-Whitney and Fisher tests ( $p = 0.451$  and  $p = 0.243$   
28 respectively) between patients in CSF-L and control groups.

### 29 30 *Degree of the angle of LLCP*

31 In the CSF-L group the mean degree of the angle formed by the LLCP and the  
32 continuation of the horizontal plane passing through the cribriform plate was  $41.2 \pm$   
33  $10.3^\circ$  in the CSF-L side, while it was  $50.1 \pm 10.4^\circ$  in the contralateral one. This  
34 difference was found significant on Mann-Whitney test ( $p = 0.003$ ). According to  
35 Gera classification system<sup>(2)</sup>, the most common anatomical variation in the CSF-L  
36 side was angle class III (19 patients, 79.2%). In the contralateral side the most  
37 common anatomical variation was angle class II (14 patients, 58.3%). These  
38 differences were found significant on Fisher test ( $p = 0.005$ ).

39 In the control group the mean degree of the angle was  $71.7 \pm 12.4^\circ$  in the right side  
40 and  $71.1 \pm 11.2^\circ$  in the left side. These differences were found not significant on  
41 Mann-Whitney test ( $p = 0.799$ ). The most common anatomical variation was angle  
42 class II both in the right and left side (64 patients, 64%, and 65 patients, 65%  
43 respectively). These differences were found not significant on Fisher test ( $p = 0.887$ ).  
44 Significant differences were demonstrated both in the mean degree of the angle ( $p =$   
45  $0.002$  at Mann-Whitney test), and in the distribution of angle classes according to  
46 Gera classification ( $p = 0.010$  at Fisher test) between patients in CSF-L and control  
47 group. In particular, patients in CSF-L group scored lower in the mean degree of the  
48 angle and were more frequently classified as angle class III.

49  
50 The sensitivity, specificity, positive and negative predictive values for Keros and Gera

1 classification systems are reported in Table 3. Gera classification system scored  
2 higher in all the above mentioned parameters.

3

4

5

## 1 DISCUSSION

2 In this retrospective study, the CT scans of 124 patients who underwent ESS for CRS  
3 were analyzed according to Gera and Keros classifications in order to evaluate which  
4 is the better indicator for a high risk of iatrogenic CSF-L. The underlying hypothesis  
5 is that a more pronounced slope of the anterior skull base on the coronal plane may  
6 predispose to inadvertent skull base violation during the dissection of the more  
7 anterior ethmoidal cells and during the approach to the frontal sinus. For this reason,  
8 we speculated that the Gera classification system could be more informative than the  
9 Keros' one regarding the anatomical variations more frequently associated to  
10 iatrogenic CSFL.

11 The results here reported appear promising and further suggest the utility of Gera  
12 classification combined with the Keros' one during the preoperative CT assessment in  
13 order to prevent major complications. In our sample, the distribution of Keros classes  
14 in the control group appeared similar to those previously reported. The most common  
15 anatomical variation was Keros type 2 (61%), followed by type 1 (23%), and type 3  
16 (16%). In our previous study<sup>(2)</sup> on 190 CT scans, the results were almost equal. The  
17 mean depth of cribriform plate found in the control group appeared similar to those  
18 previously reported. Guler et al.<sup>(17)</sup> found a mean height of the ethmoidal roof ranging  
19 from 3.9 mm to 4.5 mm at the right side and from 3.9 mm to 4.4 mm at the left side.  
20 Erdem et al.<sup>(18)</sup> found a mean height of the ethmoidal roof of 6.1 mm at the right side  
21 and 6.3 mm at the left side. Meloni et al.<sup>(19)</sup> defined the mean depth of the cribriform  
22 as 5.9 mm in 106 Italian patients. Concerning the distribution of Gera classes in the  
23 control group, our results appear very similar to those previously reported. In  
24 particular, also in our previous study<sup>(2)</sup> the vast majority of patients were classified as  
25 class I and II, while only 4.6% of them were classified as at high risk for iatrogenic  
26 injuries.

27 Similar to our control group, in the CSF-L group the most common anatomical  
28 variation was Keros type 2, followed by Keros type 1, both at side of the CSF-L and  
29 at the contralateral one. Only 1 patient was classified as at high risk (Keros type 3).  
30 No differences in the distribution of Keros classes or in depth of the cribriform plate  
31 between CSF-L and control group were demonstrated. On the contrary, according to  
32 Gera classification system<sup>(2)</sup>, the most common anatomical variation at the CSF-L  
33 side was angle class III (19 out of 24 patients). The difference in the mean angle  
34 degree and in the distribution of Gera classes among patients in control and CSF-L  
35 groups was found significant, as well as the difference in the mean angle degree and  
36 in the Gera classes distribution between CSF-L side and contralateral one in the CSF-  
37 L group. These findings are similar to those reported by Heaton et al.<sup>(10)</sup> who  
38 compared the slope of the skull base on the coronal plane in CSF-L patients and in a  
39 control group and concluded that CSF-L patients have a larger slope of the skull base  
40 than those of the control group.

41 The data here reported suggest that CSF-L patients were characterized by a lower  
42 angle degree. In addition, the degree of the angle was significantly lower at the side of  
43 the CSF-L. It is consequently possible to speculate that a classification system based  
44 on the degree of the angle (such as the Gera's one) might be more sensitive to  
45 anatomical variations associated with CSF-L than that of Keros. According to the  
46 latter, only 1 out of 24 patients was considered at high risk to develop an iatrogenic  
47 injury. On the other hand, according to Gera classification 19 out of 24 patients were  
48 considered at high risk. The higher values of sensitivity, specificity, PPV and NPV for  
49 the Gera classification system compared to the Keros' one, further suggest the  
50 application of the former during the preoperative CT scan evaluation. **However,**



1 **this consideration must be taken with caution. The Keros classification, in fact, is**  
2 **well known and widely used during the pre-operative assessment of CT scans. It**  
3 **is consequently possible that the surgeon might have paid more attention during**  
4 **the ESS procedures in patients with Keros type 3. This could have reduced the**  
5 **CSF-L rate associated to Keros type 3 in our sample could be related to the fact**  
6 **that surgeons might have pay more attention during the surgery in patients with**  
7 **Keros type 3. For this reason, only a prospective study would be able to proof**  
8 **that Gera classification could be considered a better indicator for a high risk of**  
9 **CSF-L.**

10 This study presents some limitations that are related (a) to the small number of  
11 patients with CSF-L, and (b) to the multiple centers involved in the case collection.

12 a. We could argue that the small number of patients is related to low rate of CSF-L  
13 occurring during ESS. **In particular, the percentage of CSF-L among the 6023**  
14 **procedures was 0.398%. This datum is in accordance with those previously**  
15 **reported.** Hosemann et al.<sup>(20)</sup> reported a CSF-L rate of 0.2–0.8% during ESS. In order  
16 to collect a sufficient number of patients with CSF-L for group comparison we were  
17 consequently forced to collect data from different centers. Even if enlarging the  
18 sample is surely useful from a statistical point of view, it adds some variables in the  
19 analysis (study limitation b).

20 b. The four rhinologic centers involved in the study have high volume of ESS  
21 procedures. Yet, each facility has its own expertise and **a total of 6 surgeons**  
22 performed the surgical procedures. This aspect could influence the results since it was  
23 previously reported that less experienced surgeons have a higher risk of injuring the  
24 dura, while more experienced surgeons performing increasingly extensive surgery  
25 could cause dramatic complications with medico-legal consequences<sup>(20)</sup>.

26 In conclusion, intraoperative iatrogenic CSF-L still represents a possible complication  
27 during ESS procedures **that even a large surgical experience can not prevent.**  
28 Despite the advances in the technological devices, instrumentations and surgical  
29 techniques, a deep anatomical knowledge and a meticulous preoperative analysis of  
30 the imaging remain a keystone in preventing this complication. Gera classification  
31 system presents good sensitivity and specificity in predicting a possible LLCP injury  
32 during ESS and its application, together with the Keros one, may be useful in the  
33 preoperative CT scan evaluation.

34  
35

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2 Andrea Preti is a PhD student of the “Experimental and Translational Medicine”  
3 course at University of Insubria.

4 Stefania Gallo is a PhD student of the “Biotechnology, Biosciences and Surgical  
5 Technology” course at University of Insubria.

6

7

8 AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

9 Ottaviani F, Castelnovo P, Gera R, Schindler A, Dragonetti A, Yakirevitch A:  
10 Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work, revising it critically  
11 for important intellectual content, final approval of the version to be published.

12 Gallo S, Zocchi J, Bandi F, Guidugli G: Substantial contributions to the acquisition of  
13 data for the work, revising it critically for important intellectual content and final  
14 approval of the version to be published.

15 Preti A, Mozzanica F: Substantial contributions to the analysis and interpretation of  
16 data for the work. Drafting the work. Final approval of the version to be published.

17 Ambrogi F, Mozzanica F: Substantial contributions to the statistical analysis and the  
18 interpretation of data for the work, revising it critically for important intellectual  
19 content and final approval of the version to be published.

20

21 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

22 Each Author has no conflict of interest to declare.

23

24

25

26

1 REFERENCES

- 2
- 3 1. Ulualp SO. Complications of endoscopic sinus surgery: appropriate  
4 management of complications. *Curr Opin Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg* 2008;  
5 16: 252-259.
- 6 2. Gera R, Mozzanica F, Karligkiotis A, et al. Lateral lamella of the cribriform  
7 plate, a keystone landmark: proposal for a novel classification system.  
8 *Rhinology* 2017; 25. [Epub ahead of print].
- 9 3. Dessi P, Castro F, Triglia JM, et al. Major complications of the sinus surgery:  
10 a review of 1192 procedures. *J Laryngol Otol* 1985; 108: 212-215.
- 11 4. Ohnishi T, Yanigasawa E. Lateral lamella of the cribriform plate an important  
12 high-risk area in endoscopic sinus surgery. *Ear Nose Throat J* 1995; 74; 688-  
13 690.
- 14 **5. Kubik M, Lee S, Snyderman C, Wang E. Neurologic sequelae associated**  
15 **with delayed identification of iatrogenic skull base injury during**  
16 **endoscopic sinus surgery (ESS). *Rhinology* 2017; 55: 53-58.**
- 17 6. Skorek A, Tretiakow D, Szmuda T, Przewozny T. Is the Keros classification  
18 alone enough to identify patients with the ‘dangerous ethmoid’? An  
19 anatomical study. *Acta Oto-Laryngologica* 2017; 137: 2.
- 20 7. Kainz J, Stammberger H. The roof of the anterior ethmoid: a locus minoris  
21 resistentiae in the skull base. *Laryngorhinootologie* 1988; 66; 142-149.
- 22 8. Keros P. On the practical value of differences in the level of the lamina cribrosa  
23 of the ethmoid. *Laryngorhinootologie* 1962; 41: 808-813.
- 24 9. Kainz J, Stammberger H. The roof of the anterior ethmoid: a locus minoris  
25 resistentiae in the skull base. *Laryngorhinootologie* 1988; 66; 142-149.
- 26 10. Heaton CM, Goldberg AN, Pletcher SD, Glastonbury CM. Sinus Anatomy  
27 Associated With Inadvertent Cerebrospinal Fluid Leak During Functional  
28 Endoscopic Sinus Surgery. *Laryngoscope* 2012; 122: 1446-1449.
- 29 11. Ramakrishnan VR, Suh JD, Kennedy DW. Ethmoid skull-base height: a  
30 clinically relevant method of evaluation. *Int Forum Allergy Rhinology* 2011;  
31 11: 396-400.
- 32 12. Lee JC, Song YJ, Chung YS, et al. Height and shape of the skull base as risk  
33 factors for skull base penetration during endoscopic sinus surgery. *Ann Otol*  
34 *Rhinol Laryngol* 2007; 116: 199–205.
- 35 13. Lebowitz RA, Terk A, Jacobs JB, et al. Asymmetry of the ethmoid roof:  
36 analysis using coronal computed tomography. *Laryngoscope* 2001; 111:  
37 2122–2124.
- 38 14. Meyers RM, Valvassori G. Interpretation of anatomic variations of computed  
39 tomography scans of the sinuses: a surgeon’s perspective. *Laryngoscope* 1998;  
40 108: 422–425.
- 41 15. Savvateeva DM, Guldner C, Murthum T, et al. Digital volume tomography  
42 (DVT) measurements of the olfactory cleft and olfactory fossa. *Acta Oto-*  
43 *Laryngologica* 2010; 130: 398-404.
- 44 16. Lund VJ, Stammberger H, Fokkens WJ, et al. European position paper on the  
45 anatomical terminology of the internal nose and paranasal sinuses. *Rhinol*  
46 *Suppl* 2014; 24: 1-34.
- 47 17. Guler C, Uysal IO, Polat K, et al. Analysis of the ethmoid roof and skull base  
48 with coronal section paranasal sinus computed tomography. *J Craniof Surg*  
49 2012; 23: 1460-1464.
- 50 18. Erdem G1, Erdem T, Miman MC, Ozturan O. A radiological anatomic study

1 of the cribriform plate compared with constant structures. *Rhinology* 2004; 42:  
2 225-229.

3 19. Meloni F, Mini R, Rovasio S, et al. Anatomic variations of surgical  
4 importance in ethmoid labyrinth and sphenoid sinus. A study of radiologic  
5 anatomy. *Surg Radiol Anat* 1992; 14: 65-70.

6 20. Hosemann W, Draf C. Danger points, complications and medico-legal aspects  
7 in endoscopic sinus surgery. *GMS Curr Top Otorhinolaryngol Head Neck*  
8 *Surg* 2013; 12: Doc06.

9  
10 **CORRESPONDING AUTHOR**

11 Francesco Mozzanica, MD  
12 Department of Biomedical and Clinical Sciences, University of Milan, Italy  
13 Address: Via G.B. Grassi 74, Milan  
14 Phone: +39 023903526  
15 E-mail: Francesco.mozzanica@gmail.com

16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22 **FIGURES**

23 Figure 1. Point of assessment of the measurements taken: the convergence between  
24 the fovea ethmoidalis and the LLCP on the frontal plane (A) at the level of the  
25 anterior wall of the first fovea ethmoidalis on the sagittal plane (C). Correspondence  
26 of the point in the axial plane (B).

27  
28  
29 Figure 2. Depth of the cribriform plate: measured as the vertical height of the  
30 olfactory fossa in the coronal plane.

31  
32  
33 Figure 3. Angle between the LLCP and continuation of the horizontal plane passing  
34 through the cribriform plate (treaty line), defining the Gera's classification.

35  
36

1 Table 1. Distribution of skull base measurements in the two groups of patients. The  
 2 mean  $\pm$  standard deviation are reported as well as the results of comparison between  
 3 the parameters obtained in the CSF-L and control groups through Mann Whitney test.  
 4 Ranges are reported in brackets. Angle = degree of the angle formed by the LLCPC and  
 5 continuation of the horizontal plane passing through the cribriform plate.  
 6

	CSF-L group (n = 24)			Control group (n = 100)		
	CSF-L side	Controlateral	p	Right	Left	p
Depth of the cribriform plate (mm)	4.3 $\pm$ 1.7 (2.3-8.0)	4.5 $\pm$ 1.6 (2.1-6.8)	0.802	5.2 $\pm$ 1.7 (2.4-10.1)	5.5 $\pm$ 1.6 (2.8-10.3)	0.839
Angle (degrees)	41.2 $\pm$ 10.3 (27-48)	50.1 $\pm$ 10.4 (30-65)	0.003	71.7 $\pm$ 12.4 (30-88)	71.1 $\pm$ 11.2 (28-90)	0.799

7  
 8  
 9  
 10

1 Table 2: Distribution of Keros and Gera classes in the two groups of patients. The  
 2 results of the Fisher test are also reported. Percentages are reported in brackets.  
 3

Classes		CSF-L group (n = 24)			Control group (n = 100)		
		CSF-L side	Controlateral	p	Right	Left	p
Keros	1	10 (41.7%)	9 (37.5%)	0.545	23 (23%)	30 (30%)	0.497
	2	13 (54.2%)	15 (62.5%)		61 (61%)	59 (59%)	
	3	1 (4.1%)	0 (0%)		16 (16%)	11 (11%)	
Gera class	I	1 (4.1%)	0 (0%)	0.005	32 (32%)	31 (31%)	0.887
	II	4 (16.7%)	14 (58.3%)		64 (64%)	65 (65%)	
	III	19 (79.2%)	10 (41.7%)		4 (4%)	4 (4%)	

4  
 5  
 6  
 7

1 Table 3. Sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value (PPV) and negative  
2 predictive value (NPV) for Keros and Gera classification system. Confidence  
3 intervals at 90% are reported in brackets.  
4

	<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Specificity</b>	<b>PPV</b>	<b>NPV</b>
Keros classification	4.2% (1.6%-9.8%)	84% (76.1%-89.7%)	5.9% (2.7%-12%)	78.5% (70%-85.2%)
Gera classification	79.2% (70.8%-85.7%)	96% (90.4%-98.5%)	82.6% (74.5%-88.6%)	95% (89.2%-97.9%)

5  
6  
7  
8  
9