

# LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

**To: Editor, *The Angle Orthodontist***

**RE: Joshi MR. Transmigrant mandibular canines: a record of 28 cases and a retrospective review of the literature. *Angle Orthod.* 2001;71:12–22.**

I have read with interest the article on this subject and would like to comment on some of the topics mentioned in it.

Under the review of literature, the author has mentioned in page 12 that “Thoma<sup>1</sup> described this anomaly in living patients for the first time.” In fact, it was Bluestone<sup>2</sup> who for the first time described this anomaly in the journal *Dental Items of Interest* in 1951. Thoma<sup>1</sup> described the condition in his textbook published a year later (1952).

The author had mentioned in table 1 (page 13) of the article that bilateral transmigration of mandibular canines was reported for the first time by Joshi et al<sup>3</sup> in 1982, not knowing that bilateral transmigration had already been reported by Cowman<sup>4</sup> in 1979.

Careful consideration of table 1 (chronological listings of authors and the clinical features of transmigrated canines) in the article revealed that works of eight authors<sup>2,4,5–10</sup> were never included in the study. These works should be included in future studies for completeness of the articles and for getting the facts right from the literature. The noninclusion of these studies may even affect the pattern analysis of the transmigrant mandibular canines.

There were more studies<sup>11–13</sup> published after 1994 and before 2001 that looked into the anomaly. Finally, I would like to commend the author for a marvelous job done in the compilation and analysis of the literature on the topic of mandibular canine transmigration.

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## Response from Dr. Joshi:

Even though the dictionary meaning of “research” is a careful search to discover facts by scientific study of a subject; or making a thorough inquiry of some scientific material. It can be said that, if, one goes deep into the study of a matter, every research has its own limitations. Therefore, to my mind “research” means search again and again, and probably every time some new information is found.

I had reported my first case of Bilateral Transmigration of Mandibular canines in *Br J Orthod*. 1982;9:57–58. At that time its historical importance had not come to my mind. I just reported it as an extremely rare case of malocclusion. The then Editor of *Br J Orthod* also had mentioned in his acceptance letter that it is a very unique case. Secondly from Vicchi & Franchi’s papers, I observed that there was no one prior to Joshi, et al to report on Bilateral TrMnC. And, therefore, in my third paper (*Angle Orthod*), I mentioned this information.

I have never heard about the reference of Cowman and Wootton’s paper in *NZ Dent J*. 1979;75:113–114, prior to Dr. Muralidhar’s letter. Moreover the title of Cowman, Wootton’s paper is also rather misleading “Bilateral Impaction of Mand. Canines”. What I should have mentioned on a

safer side in *Angle Orthod* paper, that “Joshi, et al were probably the first ones to describe Bilateral TrMnC”.

Now about the first to describe Transmigration: In my second paper on this subject, *Quint Int.*1994;25:291–294, I had mentioned “Caldwell appears to have been the first one to report this anomaly in 1955”. At that time Thoma’s book that I had referred to was of 1969, 5th Edition. I, therefore, placed Thoma’s name later than Caldwell. Before my third paper in *Angle Orthodontist*, I found Thoma’s 2nd Edition 1952. Hence, I corrected this information in my *Angle Orthodontist* paper by placing Thoma on the top, and before Caldwell. What I am trying to say is that corrections are necessary in research, as more information is known.

Now about Bluestone’s article; on page 347, Figure 7a & 7b, and on page 348, Figure 9a & Figure 9b show 2 different cases of mandibular impacted canines along with cystic condition around them. I have marked the description of these two cases in my copy of Bluestone’s article. However, since Bluestone had given more importance to surgical procedures, therefore, perhaps it must have missed my attention while finally writing my paper. However this is an unintentional lapse on my part.

I cannot understand what the letter writer means by “authors 3,5,6–11 were never included in the study”. They are all in Table No. 1. He also advises “they be included in the further studies”. I am not going to do any more study on this topic but if Dr. Murlidhar wants, he should note this point for himself.

I also do not understand the meaning of Dr. Murlidhar’s following statement: “There were more studies 12–14 pub-

lished after 1994 and before, which looked into this anomaly”. In this connection, I would like to call Dr. Murlidhar’s attention, to the last paragraph before “conclusions” in my *Angle Orthodontist* paper which is clear in itself. I do not know where Dr. Murlidhar was prior to his DDS and whether he had any postgraduate education in India! That is because he probably would know then, how difficult, sometimes impossible, it is to get the reference literature for such a work. For this paper I have, written letters to individual authors getting their addresses somehow and then requesting them to send me reprints of their works on TrMnC. Some did oblige me, some didn’t bother even to respond and as such this research work of mine, was going on for practically more than five years. Dr. Sheldon Peck has been of great help to me in getting and copying articles from very old journals and other reference material. Dr. Robert Isaacson, Editor, *The Angle Orthodontist* was very encouraging before publication of this paper.

Lastly I would like to mention here that my paper was not on the historical aspects of the anomaly, but was more about the clinical aspects of this condition. I had mentioned the historical aspect just to complete my paper. Anyway, I extend my thanks to Dr. Murlidhar for keenly reading and pointing out the flaws in my paper.

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