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### **Oval bone cavity in a 4th century mandible**

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We report a case of Stafne's defect in a 4th century mandible from a 45-49 year old male recovered from Zmajevac antique site, Croatia. Stafne's defect is a circumscribed, oval bone cavity located below the mandibular canal, above the mandibular base and between the mandibular angle and the third mandibular molar. Many consider it a developmental anomaly, resulting from pressure, erosion or inclusion of a portion of the submandibular salivary gland. However, aetiology and biology of Stafne's defects remains unclear. Other terms that refer to this entity are latent, static or idiopathic defect, cavity or cyst; mandibular salivary gland inclusion; lingual mandibular bone cavity or depression; Stafne cyst or cavity; ectopic or aberrant salivary gland. Studies report an incidence between 0.10 and 0.48%. Skeletons used in this case report are part of the Osteological collection of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. CT scan was used to analyze and describe the entity. CT scan showed an 11.2 x 8.6 x 6.3 mm unilocular, radiolucent, oval lesion located on the lingual side of the mandible, below the second and third molar and above the inferior margin of the mandible. Floor of the defect is smooth and borders clearly demarcated. Lingual cortex is discontinued while the buccal is thin and slightly widened. We present a case of Stafne's defect rarely presented in anthropological research. CT analysis is suitable for research on dry bone specimens and may be useful for understanding the aetiology of Stafne's defects.

Keywords: Stafne's defect; mandible; bone cyst; X ray; computerized tomography