Introduction

In transnasal endoscopic pituitary surgery and transsellar approaches to anterior skull base lesions, a bony sella window is created with the lateral limits being the carotid arteries.

Sphenoid anatomy is variable in terms of the degree of pneumatization as well as bony anatomy around the pituitary gland and internal carotid arteries.

We describe a radiological sign ascertained from computerised tomography (CT) that when present indicates whether the carotid arteries can be readily identified endoscopically on entering the sphenoid sinus.

The 'Teddy Bear' sign

On the axial CT the carotid arteries may produce protuberances either side of the sella which together with the bony sella and dorsum sella appear to form the outline of the head of a teddy bear. The carotid arteries appear as the ears of the bear. When present, the junction between the 'ears' and top of the 'teddy bear's' head is the junction between the carotid artery and pituitary; and can be clearly identified endoscopically thereby aiding the maximum lateral resection of sella bone for optimal tumour clearance. When this sign is not present then the junction between the sella and carotids may not be clear and surgeons must be cautious and consider utilising neuronavigation.