Editorial

Dissection and Teaching of Human Anatomy

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Dissecting is to study the human body through the separation of parts - dissecare, with the aim of recognizing the different anatomical structures that compose it while preserving its syntopy, based on the regional study of the human body [1,2].

The practice of dissection dates back to eastern antiquity, and Herophilus of the School of Alexandria, in the 3rd century BC, it was one of the forerunners of anatomical research based on this method [3,4]. At the end of the Middle Ages, the birth of universities consecrated the teaching of anatomy and dissection were progressively introduced as a practice of the medical curriculum after a slow break of cultural and religious paradigms.

In 1316, Mondino de' Liuzzi published *Anothomia*, the first anatomical description based on the segmental dissection of the human body. Mondino, with a clear and objective method, points to the importance of *anothomiam facere - anothomiam videre* as a mean for understanding the structure of the human body based on the practical study of the corpse, and it is important to point him as the first modern anatomist. Despite some inaccuracies and rudimentary techniques in the conservation of bodies, dissection was decisive for the beginning of an era of advances in anatomical knowledge [5,6]. In 1543, the work that marks the birth of modern anatomy was published. Entitled *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* by Andreas Vesalius [7], which largely contributed to the consolidation of dissection as a teaching method and basis of anatomical knowledge in the world and spread to the new world until the 20th century.

However, approaching the current scenario, it is possible to see that most medical schools abandoned the anatomical study of cadaveric parts due to the difficulty of capturing cadavers and the lack of prestige of dissection, replacing it exclusively with the study in artificial models and digital resources. Even in schools where the study is carried out on cadavers, the practice of dissection is increasingly rare.

Despite the global movement of awareness of the legitimate and ethical use of the cadaver through donation to medical schools for the purpose of study, dissection has suffered considerable retraction within medical education. Much of this difficulty is due to the reduced collection of cadavers for teaching, a growing difficulty amid the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic [8].

Learning anatomy depends on a balance between memorization, understanding and observation [9].

This way, dissection plays an important role as a pedagogical tool in classical training and in the development of skills that are little worked on within the medical curriculum [4,10,11], constituting an excellent method for solving clinical and surgical problems, and the gold standard for teaching and research in anatomy [8]. Anatomy remains the basis of medical training - *Clavis et Clavus Medicinae*, and the acquisition of knowledge with a doubly edifying character is centralized in the corpse, in the words of Renato Locchi: technical-scientific and humanistic [12].

It is known, however, which the advances in MR and CT imaging techniques, new tools have been incorporated into the anatomical study and provide valuable resources for understanding the topographic approach to the human body, however, they do not replace the experience of studying the cadaver.

Thus, the maintenance of the use of cadavers and dissection techniques guarantee the deepening of the knowledge of topographic anatomy and the preservation of a relevant and differential didactic resource in the humanistic formation of the student. As a final reflection, anatomy is learned on the dissection table and there is no anatomy without a cadaver.

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