New insights in anatomical education

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Anatomical education has become more and more challenging due to numerous factors: exponential expansion of medical knowledge, recurrent changes in most academic medical curricula, emergence of new and attractive pedagogical tools, general dramatic improvements in information technology, increasing number of medical students, and shortage of bodies. Today, the place of the two traditional keystones of anatomy teaching, e.g. didactic lectures based on drawings and cadaveric dissection, is largely debated.

This issue illustrates various aspects of such a crucial question.

The students' emotional perceptions of the use of cadavers for educational purposes and their psychological outcomes have been investigated. The additional role of virtual dissection that can either replace, or be added to, traditional cadaveric dissection has been evaluated as objectively as possible.

More generally, the general intensive improvements in information technology has evidently revolutionized the teaching of anatomy, offering a myriad of new other tools. Among them, online versus traditional methods are they preferred by the students? It is the topic of another paper in this issue.

The place and effectiveness of exciting new tools such as 3D stereoscopy and 3D models, have also been assessed.

In addition, medical imaging can be used as a prominent educational tool, not only for radiological anatomy per se, but also thanks to the dramatic technical advances

in the field, providing practical and attractive new learning resources, the place of which has still to be more precisely defined. In this issue, the effectiveness of blended learning in radiologic anatomy has been investigated.

The modalities of evaluation of students' anatomical knowledge is another crucial topic that is also continuously evolving. A "free response short answer questions" model of evaluation is presented and debated.

Besides, very special context, evidently such as the COVID-19 pandemic, may greatly interfere with anatomy education. Major changes were urgently imposed, both for teaching, through lectures and dissection courses, and also for evaluations. Such an impact has been carefully evaluated.

The problem of the anatomical terminology is evoked, and this supports the high necessity to complete, develop and update this field of our activity.

Finally, on the other end of the chain, an anatomical publication may also play an important role in anatomical education. In this respect, "How to submit" is of paramount interest and has been studied in this issue.

Hoping that all these topics will in turn inspire new exciting research papers in the field of anatomical education...

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