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A brief anatomo-surgical dissection guide to human mediastinal anatomy: results of the collaboration between the University of Palermo and the University of Malta

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In the summer of 2017, thanks to an agreement between the University of Malta and the University of Palermo, a group of students from the University of Palermo, who had already taken the anatomy exams and had a good knowledge of English, went for a 4 week period to the University of Malta to follow a dissection course. The students dissected skin, the sternum, the vessels, the nerves, analyzed the pericardium, the lungs and all the mediastinal organs. This work proves to be a small dissection guide for young medical students who want to learn the basics of dissection and the relevant topographical anatomy.

The students were selected by the University of Palermo because of the good quality of their university career and their excellent knowledge of the English language.

The aim of this work was to analyze the mediastinum, a space between the right lung, the left lung, the sternum and the vertebral column. The mediastinum is located between a complex of organs: the heart with the pericardium, the large vascular trunks, the intermediate and distal part of the extrapulmonary respiratory tract, the thoracic portion of the esophagus, the lymphatic system with the lymph nodes, and the nervous trunks. The mediastinal space is also filled with connective tissue that fills the empty spaces between the various organs in such a way that they can maintain both an anatomical and functional independence.

Anatomically and surgically the mediastinum is divided, according to a frontal plane, in anterior and posterior mediastinum or, according to a transverse plane, in an upper and lower mediastinum.

This experience has given excellent results and we hope to make further collaborations with the University of Malta in the future.

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