Safety Guidelines and Rules of Conduct of the Cadaver Lab  
Mt San Antonio College  
Fall 2011  

Introduction  

History of Cadaver Dissection  

The study of human anatomy by means of cadaver dissection has a long tradition dating back many centuries. The Greek physician, Herophilus (335-280BC), is credited with being the first to use dissection as the basis for his understanding of the human body and is known as the father of anatomy. In addition to considerable information about the nervous system, Herophilus also demonstrated that arteries were filled with blood, not air. It was not until much later in 14th Century Italy that cadaver dissection became part of a student’s medical education. These dissections were only performed once or twice each year by the professor, and students were invited to observe. Religious pressure on the government kept cadaver dissections illegal. Grave robbers were employed to obtain the necessary human anatomical specimens. Non-human animals were also dissected, occasionally leading to some unfortunate anatomical misconceptions. Medical students began dissecting cadavers themselves during the 18th century in Paris and London. In 1831, it became legal to use unclaimed bodies for medical education in Massachusetts. However, not many bodies went unclaimed and the demands for human anatomical specimens increased as the number of individuals seeking a medical education increased. In 1839, therefore, the first organization was formed in Chicago to allow individuals to donate their bodies as anatomical gifts. This organization established a series of guidelines for donation and for embalming that set the cornerstone for the rules and regulations in place today.

Human Anatomical Specimens  

The cadavers we will be using at MtSAC come from the University of California, Irvine, Willed Body Program. Information about the willed body program is available at the following UCI website.  

These cadavers were donated under specific state and federal regulations and remain under the control of UCI. The individual donating their body does not receive financial compensation, and therefore, this is a gift to be treated in a professional manner with respect. For those of you entering a medical profession, these cadavers may be your first patients. The dissected specimen may be used for several semesters by other anatomy students. These students rely on your expertise and your careful dissection of the specimen. Ultimately, the cadaver will be returned to UCI, where the remains will be cremated.
Preservation

In most cases, low concentrations of formaldehyde and phenol, or other chemicals with similar properties, are used to preserve the cadavers for dissection. Formaldehyde is classified as a carcinogen. It is imperative, therefore, that the doors remain closed during dissection so that the ventilation system is optimized and your exposure to these chemicals is reduced. Cadaver specimens are now treated with a formaldehyde neutralizer known as “infutrace” to reduce formaldehyde vapors. However, if you are pregnant, or have a respiratory condition or some other medical condition that may be exacerbated by exposure to these chemicals, you may wish to reconsider your participation in this course.

Regulations

You must follow these rules and regulations in order to participate in the Anatomy 40 class. Your disregard of any of these regulations could result in your immediate dismissal from class:

- The cadaver lab is a restricted area. You may not take any photographs or videos at any time.
- No body parts or tissues may be removed from the cadaver lab at any time.
- Only those students enrolled in the cadaver course are allowed to participate in dissection.
- Do not bring any friends or visitors into the cadaver lab.
- The doors to the cadaver lab must be closed and locked at all times.
- Disrespect for the cadaver will not be tolerated.
- Any accidents or allergic reactions must be reported to the instructor of record immediately.
- Do not remove any identifying tags or security monitoring devices from the cadaver.
**Safety!**

There are many safety issues associated with dissecting a cadaver. Cadaver labs are rated as a Bio Safety Level 2 (BSL-2). In addition to the chemicals used to preserve the cadaver, you will also be working with sharp instruments. The following safety guidelines must be followed to ensure your safety and the safety of your lab mates:

1. Food and drink are **NEVER** allowed in the lab.
2. Only closed toed shoes may be worn in the lab. Because dissecting fluid can leak onto the floor during dissection, it is suggested that you bring in old closed toed shoes that you wear only in lab and throw away at the end of the dissection. Disposable shoe covers are recommended if you choose to wear your regular closed toed shoes.
3. Lab coats (3/4 length) must be worn at all times.
4. Used lab coats may not be worn outside of the lab. You may leave your lab coat in the lab until the next time you dissect, or take it home in a plastic bag to wash and bleach.
5. You must wear long pants or scrubs to protect your legs. Please do not wear pants that drag on the floor!
6. Disposable gloves must be worn at all times. Some students choose to wear disposable gloves first, then cover them with rubber gloves, which can be washed and kept in the lab. If you choose to wear rubber gloves, please use an indelible ink pen to write your name on the cuff of each glove.
7. All students must wear safety goggles.
8. Do not wear contact lenses in lab. Formaldehyde and other preservatives produce chemical vapors that can be absorbed by the contacts.
9. Any tissues removed from the cadaver must be placed in a designated container and kept with the body. **DO NOT PUT USED GLOVES, PAPER TOWELS, ETC. IN THAT CONTAINER! IT IS FOR TISSUES ONLY!**
10. Dispose of all scalpel blades by removing the blade carefully with a hemostat and placing the blade in the sharps container.
11. Do not leave tools and instruments on the dissecting table.

12. Each student is responsible for keeping the work area clean, and cleaning and returning all instruments to the proper area before leaving the lab.

13. Dessication is always a concern. Please make certain that you spray the cadaver and keep areas of the cadaver not being dissected covered. At the end of lab period, you must spray the cadaver, wrap it carefully, and close the body bag.

14. It is recommended that you wear old clothes, tops with short sleeves or sleeves that can be rolled up, and long sleeved lab coats to avoid direct contact of the skin with embalming fluid. You may wear scrubs, if you choose, but you must wear a lab coat in addition to the scrubs.

15. If you have long hair, or long bangs, you must secure your hair in place with hair pins, hair bands, etc., before beginning.

16. Wash your hands thoroughly before leaving the cadaver lab.

17. If fluids spill onto the floor, please use a paper towel to soak up the fluid to reduce the chances of slipping. The paper towels should be placed in the trash receptacle in the cadaver lab.

18. Please return everything back to its original place before you leave. The room must be clean and in good order. This is each person’s responsibility!

19. When in doubt, ask!

**Communicable diseases**

20. Although the cadaver has been tested and determined to be non-reactive for Hepatitis B antigen, Hepatitis C Antibody and HIV I and II, there is no guarantee that it is completely free from communicable diseases.

21. Universal precautions must be taken in handling the cadaver. Remember, this is your first patient and you usually don’t know what your patient has when you first begin to treat them!

**Additional Equipment and Resources:**

22. The cadaver lab will have dissectors and atlases available for your use. Please do not bring any books, papers, etc. into the lab (a designated area inside a cabinet will be set aside for your bookbags and/or purses).

23. All dissecting tools will be provided in the lab. **DO NOT REMOVE ANY OF THESE TOOLS. THEY BELONG TO MTSAC AND TO OUR PROGRAM!**
24. Each student must provide their own disposable gloves. If you have a latex allergy, be certain that you buy non-latex gloves. Write your name in indelible ink on the box. PLEASE DO NOT TAKE ANYONE ELSE’S GLOVES!

25. A dissection journal is maintained in the lab. Each student must enter a brief statement about their work for each lab period before leaving the lab. Since all of the students are not going to be in lab at the same time, this allows each student to communicate with the others.

Emergency Equipment and Supplies

The Mt. SAC Cadaver Lab is fully equipped with all necessary emergency equipment and supplies.

Located on the South Wall of the laboratory (by 2511) are:
   a. Telephone to dial 4400 for the Student Health Center, 4555 for Security or 9, then 911 for county emergency services.
   b. First Aid Kit
   c. Fire Extinguisher to be used by trained personnel only.

Located on the West Wall (the one with the sink) are:
   a. Emergency Shower to be used only under extreme circumstances of chemical contamination where an eye wash or a regular sink will not suffice.
   b. Eye Wash to be used if a student’s eye is splashed with a harmful chemical. The eye(s) must be washed for at least 5 minutes. REMEMBER DO NOT WEAR YOUR CONTACT LENSES!
Sign the following and return to your Laboratory Instructor by the end of the First Laboratory Period, after you have read the previous pages and understand them.

I have read and understand the security and safety regulations outlined in the previous pages. I realize that these are required by California and Federal Law and failure to abide by these rules may result in my expulsion from this course.

Print Name______________________________
Signature______________________________
Date ________________________________