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Case presentations: Unusual fissures in the lungs leading to supernumerary lobes

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Introduction & Aim: Lung fissures are partially incomplete in 50% of the subjects. Non-obliteration of spaces results in incomplete fissures which lead to a merging of lobes; conversely accessory lobes form due to the formation of new fissures. Unusual fissures can be mistaken for a lung lesion or an atypical appearance of plural effusion. Knowledge of such fissures is useful to surgeons in order to recognize variations when performing procedures such as lobectomies and segmental resections. Specialists will therefore be aware of the potential problems that might be met during such surgical interventions. This report aims to describe morphology of the lungs in terms of fissures and lobes.

Method: A descriptive observational study was done on a total of 43 bodies previously dissected by medical students in the dissection hall. Both the left and right lungs of each cadaver were examined for unusual lobes and fissures. Twenty-one (21) lungs had variations and were photographed.

Result: A wide range of variations was seen in the present study. The left side presented with unusual fissures in six lungs, one had elongated lingula and one had three lobes. The right side presented with incomplete fissures in five lungs, one lung had two lobes, one had a small middle lobe, one had an extra fissure and there was one with no horizontal fissure.

Conclusion: Knowledge of morphological variation that includes fissures and lobes is not only important for anatomy students, but also for cardiothoracic specialists as well as for radiologists in the interpretation of images from individuals presenting with a range of variations.

Biography

Kentse Mpolokeng has completed her Bachelor's degree in Human Biology from University of the Free State, South Africa. She has also completed her Master's degree of Medical Sciences in Anatomy and Cell Morphology from the University of the Free State. She is currently pursuing her PhD at University of Cape Town, South Africa.

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