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Commentary

Historical Development and Anthropology Measurements in Ancient Civilizations

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DESCRIPTION

Morphometric is introduced as quantitative approach to seek information concerning variations and changes in the forms of organisms that described the relationship between the human body and disease. Scientists of all civilization, who existed until today, examined the human body using anthropology methods. For these reasons, anthropology data are used in many contexts to screen for or monitor disease. Anthropology, a branch of morphometric, is the study of the size and shape of the components of biological forms and their variations in populations.

Morphometric can also be defined as the quantitative analysis of biological forms. The field has developed rapidly over the last two decades to the extent that we now distinguish between traditional morphometric and the more recent geometric morphometric. Advances in imaging technology have resulted in the protection of a greater amount of morphological information and have permitted the analysis of this information. The oldest and most commonly used of these methods is radiography. With developments in this area, CT and MRI have also been started to be used in screening of the internal organs. Morphometric measurements that are used in medicine are widely used in the diagnosis and the follow-up and the treatment of the disease, today. In addition, in cosmetology use of these new measurements is increasing every day.

Over the ages, all civilizations have been interested in the human body. Artists in particular have reflected the effects of this interest in their works. In the ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations, famous artists used male figures in their artwork (*i.e.*, pictures and statues) with the desire to represent issues such as beauty, virtue, independence, military power, and authority. In the ancient era, artists were interested in the depiction of body parts based on reciprocal proportions. Artists believed that the human body represented as "an ideal human figure" had specific proportions between its constituent parts. Throughout history, these proportions were considered to be canon. In practical use, any given part of the human body could be chosen for measurement and proportioned to the other parts due to the absence of standardized measurement units such as the meter, centimeter, or millimeter. Therefore, any given human body part could be described as a "unit of measurement" (module). These measurement units contained various modules such as the length of the feet, length of the hand, and height of the head. Throughout history there have been studies related to the "human body" branches of art (*i.e.*, sculpture and painting) as well as studies related to anatomy in the field of medicine. In the three most well-known ancient civilizations, scholars evaluated the "human body" using the concepts of canon and modules.

Egyptian civilization

The first known dissections with the aim of learning (III century BC) were performed by scholars in Egypt. In the most ancient cannon, "Length of Feet" (LF) was used as the module. Human figures drawn on the walls of the pyramids by Egyptian artists were depicted with heights six times longer than the length of their feet; however, when the artists noticed that the proportions did not reflect reality, they adjusted the height of taller human figures to a height equivalent to seven feet. According to our present arithmetic knowledge, they proportioned the horizontal lines based on height and the vertical lines based on the width of the human body.

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