



## Background story of the cover picture

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The cover image shows the famous Anatomy lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp painted by Rembrandt in Amsterdam, in the year 1632. Rembrandt was commissioned by the Amsterdam Guild of surgeons to paint a picture of the board surgeons while attending an anatomical dissection. Rembrandt was 26 years old at that time and this painting is considered his first masterpiece. The picture shows on the left, the surgeons observing the dissection in awe. The man with the hat is the physician Nicolaes Tulp who served as the university lecturer in anatomy. The corpse was of a criminal who was sentenced to death by hanging and was handed over to the surgeons for dissection after the execution. There is some confusion regarding the anatomical accuracy of the dissected left forearm, as the depicted flexor muscles on first sight seem to originate from the lateral epicondyle. However, the forearm is extended and supinated, correctly exposing the medial epicondyle of the humerus. It is hardly conceivable that an artist like Rembrandt was mistaken about the appearance of the anatomical structures. The painting is on display in the Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis in The Hague, The Netherlands.

For further reading, see: Ijpmma FFA, van Gulik TM. The Anatomy Lesson of Nicolaes Tulp, painted by Rembrandt in 1632. *BJS* 2016;103:1408.

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### Footnote

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