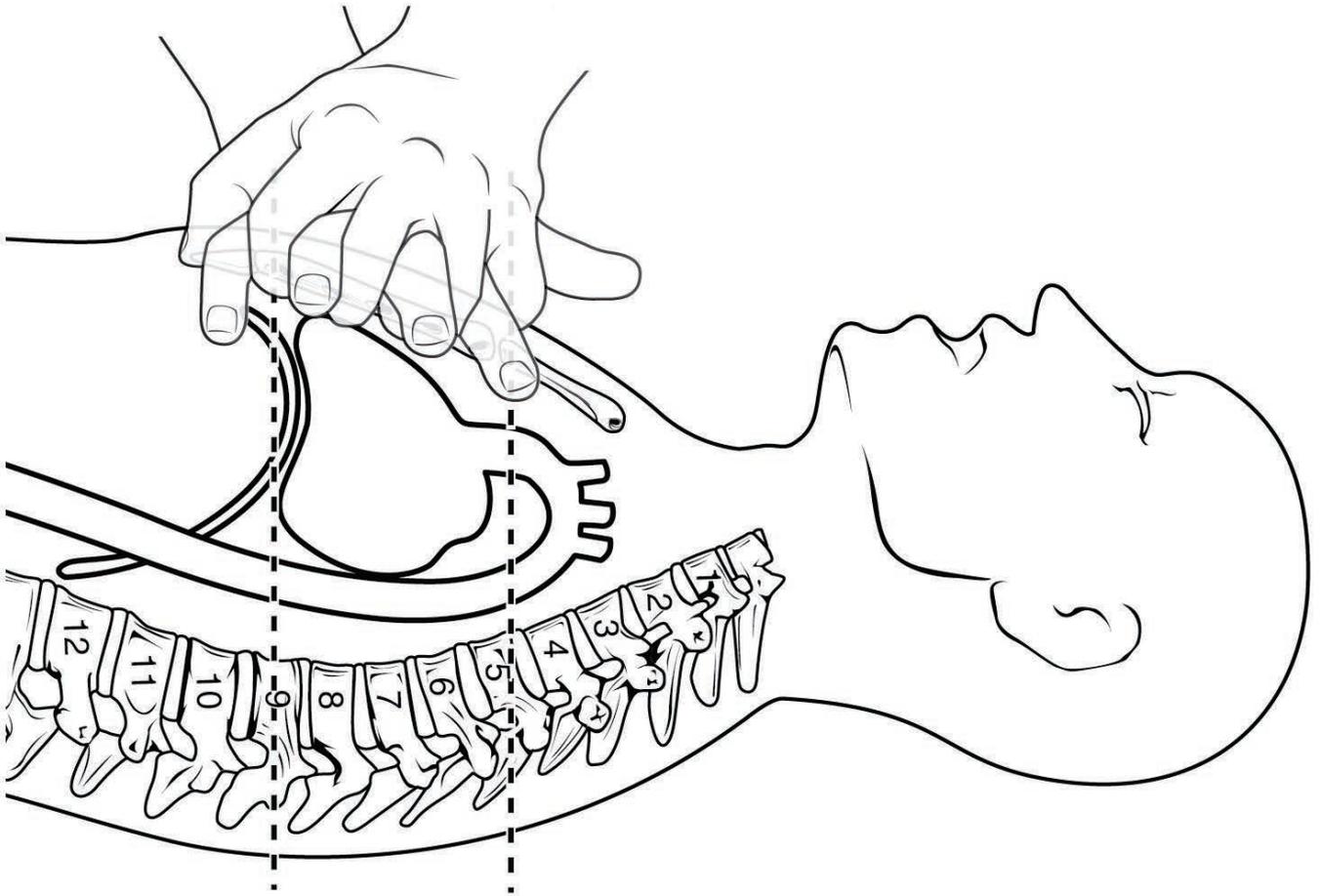


The history of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)



Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, also known by the acronym CPR, is an emergency procedure performed in an effort to manually preserve intact brain function until further measures are taken to restore spontaneous blood circulation and breathing in a person who is in cardiac arrest. It is a basic but proven first aid skill, practiced throughout the world. It is an effective method of keeping a victim of cardiac arrest alive long enough for definitive treatment to be delivered, usually defibrillation and intravenous cardiac drugs.

Prior to the inception of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, there had been some techniques to keep people alive developed

in the 18th Century, both in Japan and in Europe. It was not until the mid-20th Century that James Elam and Peter Safar discovered and published the truly effective method known as CPR. Safar conducted research on existing basic life support procedures including controlling a person's breathing airway by tilting back his or her head with an open mouth and using mouth-to-mouth breathing. He combined these with a procedure known as closed-chest cardiac massage to become the basic life support method of CPR.

Throughout his life Safar was hesitant to take credit for 'inventing' CPR. The way he saw it, he merely brought to light effective

procedures that humans had already discovered, putting them together into what he called "the ABCs" ie maintaining a patient's airway, breathing and circulation. He worked hard to popularise the procedure around the world and collaborated with Norwegian toy maker Asmund Laerdal to create 'Resusci Anne', the CPR training mannequin. Laerdal now is a medical equipment manufacturer.

Safar also created the first guidelines for community-wide emergency medical services or EMS; he founded the International Resuscitation Research Centre (IRRC) at the University of Pittsburgh, which he directed until 1994 and he was nominated three times for the Nobel Prize in medicine.