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Integrating mental imagery and fascial tissue: A conceptualization for research into movement and cognition

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Abstract

Mental imagery (MI) research has mainly focused to date on mechanisms of effect and performance gains associated with muscle and neural tissues. MI's potential to affect fascia has rarely been considered. This paper conceptualizes ways in which MI might mutually interact with fascial tissue to support performance and cognitive functions. Such ways acknowledge, among others, MI's positive effect on proprioception, body schema, and pain. Drawing on cellular, physiological, and functional similarities and associations between muscle and fascial tissues, we propose that MI has the potential to affect and be affected by fascial tissue. We suggest that fascia-targeted MI (fascial mental imagery; FMI) can therefore be a useful approach for scientific as well as clinical purposes. We use the example of fascial dynamic neuro-cognitive imagery (FDNI) as a codified FMI method available for scientific and therapeutic explorations into rehabilitation and prevention of fascia-related disabling conditions.

Keywords: Body schema; Cognition; Dynamic neuro-cognitive imagery; Fascia; Mental imagery; Movement.

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