

Take Hold

January 2011 Newsletter

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Why Assess ?

FASCIA - BEYOND BIOMECHANICS

By: Ryan Young, BHSc, RMT, SMT(cc)

Several people looked at me as if I had two heads when I told them that I would be traveling from Halifax to Vancouver, for a one-day workshop last November. Yes, for anyone stuck thinking about it, I spent more time sitting in an airplane seat than I did in the workshop. And thankfully so as I would find out. I was going to need the extra time on the way home to start to sort out everything I was about to hear.

The workshop was facilitated by the Massage Therapists' Association of BC as a prelude to the Third International Fascia Research Congress happening in March 2012. The presenters, an Italian physician named Antonio Stecco and an Australian physiotherapist by the name of Julie Ann Day, were presenting on Fascial research that had been accumulated over the last 35 years. This has culminated in the development of a Biomechanical Model of Human Movement and subsequently the Fascial Manipulation Technique.

Luigi Stecco, Antonio's father and a physiotherapist from northern Italy has been studying this mysterious tissue for the last three decades. During the last several years, however, Luigi's children have taken a vested interest in their father's endeavors. Antonio and Carla, both medical doctors, have contributed significant amounts of Medical Research, substantiating many of Luigi's original hypotheses regarding the role of Fascia in human movement.

In their efforts, Antonio and Carla have also made several connections beyond biomechanics to those between the Fascia and more systemic manifestations.

Among the highlights of the Fascial Manipulation Workshop were not only the stories from Dr. Stecco and Ms. Day, but they presented the research in a way that created a foundation of understanding for the Biomechanical Model of Human Movement.

Many of my own silent and yet unarticulated hypotheses were confirmed, and then some. The presentation not only provided me with an advanced understanding of the ability of fascia to transmit tensile forces beyond that of Thomas Myers' Anatomy Trains, but it opened a paradigm of thought processes that have, in my mind, concretely substantiated the connections many of us have known exist between the sub-systems of the body, but had as of yet been unable to explain.



FASCIAL - BEYOND BIOMECHANICS CONTINUED

They began by discussing the histology of the fascia and the importance of Hyaluronic Acid in the functioning of the Sliding Fascial Environment. This was followed by an explanation of tensile communication between superficial and deep layers of fascia. We then talked about the densification of the fascia and resultant pain due to high concentrations of Pacinian and Ruffini Corpuscles embedded in the various layers of fascia.

Dr. Stecco then shared a number of treatment anecdotes surrounding fascial tension manifesting as a mechanical stimulus that affects/stimulates the release of different hormones, neurotransmitters and/or enzymes, leading to everything from Cardiac, to Hormonal Imbalances, to Mental Health and/or Renal Conditions.

In addition to clinical studies, Dr. Carla Stecco traveled to Paris to perform a number of un-embalmed cadaver dissections. Yes, I said "Un-Embalm". The purpose was to study fascia in a state that most closely resembled living tissue. Her findings from these dissections further supported the family's hypotheses.



Lastly, a video of diagnostic ultrasound was shown, capturing the sliding system of living fascia where a fascial restriction prior to treatment was as clear as a fracture line in an xray. Then, after treatment, we observed that same tissue slide seamlessly after the restriction had been released.

The biggest mental adjustment that had to be made at the beginning of the day was to have to shift back into Latin-mode. For ease of communication across various borders and languages, all of the anatomical terms were in Latin.

The biomechanical model they presented has divided the body into specific regions based on function. Throughout the model are points called Centers of Coordination and Centers of Fusion, among other components that bring the whole concept to light. The treatments rendered from an understanding of this model allow the practitioner to locate and alleviate the primary restrictions that are either proximal or distal to sites of pain and/or inflammation.

The brilliant part of this treatment method is the fact that the practitioner often never palpates inflamed and painful areas causing further irritation. The cause of the pain is addressed rather than the pain itself. Really the epitome of "Listen to the Pain, Look Elsewhere for the Cause!"

What has also been discovered is that the meridians that this model follows are very similar to acupuncture meridians, as are the sites of treatment to acupuncture points.

For the longest time, medical researchers have been looking for the "everything;" That one component of the body that possesses the capacity to communicate between all of the subsystems of the body. The nervous and circulatory systems, while beyond extensive, still only represent a finite number of possibilities. What this research is demonstrating is a strong case for Fascia being the "everything."

Not only this, but this research is now quantifying information which many of us know to be true but have been unsuccessful in presenting in a way that the medical world will be willing to listen to and invest in.

The more I heard throughout the day, the more "light-bulb moments" and "bells" went off in my head. By the end of the day, my head was spinning, feeling as though I had just received a gift of value beyond my own current comprehension. In all honesty, I am still trying to sort it all out in my head. Reading and re-reading my handouts and the ten additional pages of notes I took down. If I could describe the experience in a word, it would be, "Profound!"

If anyone is interested in obtaining website links and/or more information about this workshop, Ryan can be reached by email at: ryanyoung.rmt@gmail.com

From the Editor

"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless" - Sherry Anderson

As the first edition of the Take Hold newsletter under my editorship, I would like to begin by saying a heartfelt thank you and acknowledgement of appreciation to Andrea Hunt for all her hard work in getting this newsletter to our membership. Our newsletter continues to exist only because of the contributions made by you, the members.

As with any change, comes an envisioning of something new. Based upon my own reviewing of past editions of the Take Hold, my foreseeable changes will involve, firstly, more diversity of content that is immediately applicable to the majority of our membership, and, secondly, less self-promotion (other than providing a small biography regarding the author of a respective article).

Despite having wanted to take on the role of editor, I still have no established format around which to help construct the Take Hold newsletter. And, without your contributions, I certainly will struggle to provide you with the type of content I think our membership would find immediately applicable to their practices.

"There are two ways of spreading light – to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." - Edith Wharton

So please forward your articles, ideas or comments if you think it might be of interest to other members.

TAKE HOLD GUIDELINES

General

Newsletter deadline:

May Issue: May 20th, 2011

All text-only submissions should be sent in MSword or Open Office format. Other file formats may be acceptable. Please contact the Editor first.

The Editor reserves the right to edit and place material where appropriate, and to accept or reject any forwarded content.

All emails to the Newsletter should contain your **full name, mailing address and telephone number** so that any difficulties can be quickly corrected.

Contributors

Newsletter content for related articles, book reviews, course reviews, reports, personal case studies experienced in your clinical settings, practice management, anatomical reviews, etc. are welcome.

Advertising

Course advertising will not be part of the newsletter. Ads For courses can be placed on the MTANS web page. Classified ads are free to MTANS members.

Contact daphnecalhoun@hotmail.com Please state *"Take Hold Article"* in the subject line.



“Think About This!”

Gillian Enright RMT, M.T.C. BA.

In history, the Emissary has delivered messages of great importance often pertaining to war, peace and the well being of persons. On these missions, the emissary could adapt to challenging circumstances, sometimes evidencing great brilliance and wisdom.

So it is with soft tissue and the mind during body work. What this means to massage therapists is that our client's soft tissue is literally “Under Our Pressure” with a mission to re-pattern and rewire the connections of, mind, body health.

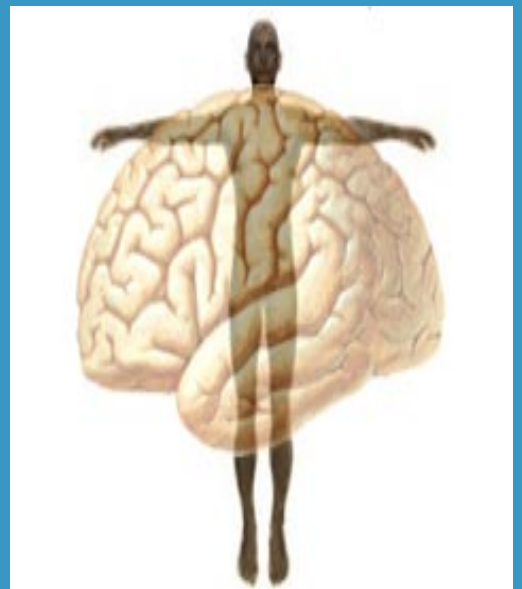
During this mission, the soft tissue will dynamically adapt by reacting and responding , opening and closing, flexing and rigidifying, forming and unforming, creating soft tissue barricades as well as boundaries all depending on the their minds interpretation of our touch and pressure.

How does the brain inform the emissary (Soft Tissue) ? It does it in two capacities:

- First the stimulus (our touch) immediately is processed at the limbic brain (the fear focus emotional brain of survival) having a 90 second full neurological brain body process.
- The second stage is that after the 90 seconds the cerebral cortex brain takes over and interprets the stimulus and chooses from the data in the right brain left brain storage files. The files of the brain contain stories and beliefs about life as welcomed and safe or as unwelcome and dangerous. During this brain body process our client is internally deciding whether to open to repair or to close off and block the treatment.

It is my belief that exciting possibilities can arise in our work if we included the new frontiers of body mind multidimensional science, such as the research and work of brain plasticity and body repair.

“ Please think about what could happen if we open our own minds to these new frontiers.” For us and our clients.



Client Safety

Jodi Forsythe BA, RMT

Every once in a while, I am reminded of how important it is to be vigilant when treating clients. As a massage therapist, I am ultimately responsible for the safety of my client, from initial intake to homecare suggestions.

I was recently reminded of this fact a few weeks ago when I overheard another massage therapist, whom I respect as knowledgeable, ethical and skilled, suggest to her client that he do his homecare stretches in the shower.

When I taught massage therapy, I remember having this discussion in class. Apparently the students had been told by another instructor to tell clients to do their stretches in the shower. My argument against it was that stretching in the shower was a bad idea for several reasons - it's wet, it's slippery, and it's very easy for people to get dizzy in the heat. As a combination of factors, this is an ultimate recipe for a slip and fall to occur.

As a matter of fact, in the article [Bath Safety - Preventing Slip and Fall Accidents in the Bathroom](http://www.articlebase.com) (www.articlebase.com), it is stated:

"Statistics show bathrooms can be the most dangerous room in your house. 70% of home accidents occur in the bathroom. The combination of water and smooth surfaces makes taking a bath or shower a risky proposition. Slip and falls account for over 20,000 fatalities per year in North America. It is the second leading cause of accidental death and disability after automobile accidents. Over 75% of slip-fall deaths occur to people 65 years of age or older..."

See my point? Yet I doubt that many massage therapists think about this fact. LY!!!! And not only for massage professionals. However, how many people blindly follow the advice of various health care professionals, much to their detriment? Tons of them, I know it. "Ultimately the client's responsibility", many clients take advice literally, trust-give them the best information possible.



massage therapy instructors OR even Should it be common sense? ABSOLUTE-ly, but for the clients themselves. I doubt the advice of various health care pro-

There may be therapists who will say "It is and you are right, to a point. But like I said, I doubt that their health care professional will

And "stretching in the shower" isn't the only area that I am disappointed to see massage therapists failing the best interests of their clients. I have refused to treat clients with Congestive Heart Failure who wanted Manual Lymphatic Drainage to relieve their edema - telling me that their previous therapist "used to do it once a week". These cases are not isolated, and failure to consider the welfare of our clients is not exclusive to the massage therapy profession. (but I won't get started on other horror stories I have heard).

I guess my main point from this discourse is that a little common sense goes a long way. For the (hopefully) rare health care professional, the almighty dollar drives her to treat clients who maybe are better off getting cleared for treatment, or for seeking alternatives to massage.

Also, as a profession that is trying to gain legitimacy, the conduct of its practitioners needs to be held to a high standard. If we act like quacks, that is how we will be viewed. If we want to be taken seriously by the public and other health care professionals, then we have to step up as individuals and as a collective and do right by our clients, even if it means turning people away. We have a Code of Ethics for a reason, and need to keep it in mind for every client.

Stop and think before giving clients advice, remembering that they are looking to us as professionals to act in their best interest. By putting client safety first, our reputation as a viable health care modality will continue to blossom in Nova Scotia.

DID YOU KNOW? Many people are unaware of the many avenues that you can take once you have become a registered massage therapist. Many of us think of the standard things, myofascial release, lymph drainage, cranial sacral, etc. one of the modalities that I had no idea was in the scope of massage therapy was acupuncture. I was under the impression that it was for doctors of Chinese medicine, naturopaths and physiotherapists not for us RMT's.

I was so please when I found out that acupuncture was something that I could add to my practice. After completing a two day intro to acupuncture course, I was sold and signed up for foundations in acupuncture with the Canadian College of Acupuncture and Therapeutics.

Not to be taken lightly, the study of acupuncture is along side if not surpasses the intensity of the 2200 hours spent learning massage therapy. The course undertakes the knowledge of pointing (which is treating a specific muscle) to comprehending the advance diagnosis and treatment according to Chinese medicine.

Now with acupuncture I am able to help clients with various chronic conditions such as TMJ, plantar fasciitis and more comprehensive ailments that include treating the body and the "spirit".

Article by: Annis Downey, BA, RMT

Conference & Trade Show 2011

After a year break and a newly built committee the Conference & trade show is set to go May 6th to 8th in Halifax at Mount Saint Vincent University.

I'm please to introduce the new committee and thank them for all their hard work; Tanya Durling, Terry White, Jennifer Stuart, Annis Downey and our board liaison, Jackie Blackburn. I would like to extend a big thank you to Annis who has who has been doing a fabulous job with her computer to help revamp the committee documents.

We are please to be offering an exciting slate of workshops covering a wide variety of topics such as 'Massage Therapist as Labour Support/Provider/Doula'; 'Intro to Acupuncture'; ' Post Surgical Treatment of Mastectomy/Implants" just to name a few, I'm sure you'll find something to peak your interest.

The trade show is taking shape and promising to offer a variety of options and will be open to both conference attendees and non-attendees.

The usual conference staples will offer ample opportunities to network and connect with our massage community, friends, colleagues, board and committee members. The Annual General Meeting and Meet & Greet kick off the weekend on Friday evening; Pub & Open Mic Night with entertainer Mike Chapman and banquet Saturday evening as well as lots of gifts and give a ways' over the weekend. The 2011 Conference is promising to provide a weekend of new memories hope to see you there!

Peg McMartin RMT
Conference & Trade Show Chair



UPCOMING
EVENT

From the Massage Table... Gratitude

Monica Miller, BSc, RMT

Gratitude. Simply saying the word has the ability to provoke profound thought. The dictionary defines it as a state of thankfulness but *the experience* of gratitude is much more powerful than simple words can describe. It's something that commands you to sit up and take notice of your life and the world and people around you. It provokes a sense of awe at the magnitude of prosperity which we find ourselves the beneficiaries of on a daily basis.

I attended a Chamber of Commerce meeting in St Margaret's Bay. I don't often get the opportunity to attend these events as I'm usually working well into the evening most nights. Following the usual course of events (I can only assume they were usual as I don't regularly attend these meetings) we were treated to a presentation by a man named Steve Foran (www.giveraising.com). The topic of the presentation was experiencing the power of gratitude. Steve presented us with a technique. The tool he uses in his daily life to remind himself to be grateful for something is to switch something on his body (in this case, his engineering ring from his right pinky finger to his left). The simple act of taking something that we have every day but have become oblivious to and placing it in a position of recognition (it could also be tightening your belt a notch or switching your watch from one wrist to the other) is your cue... your cue to be mindful of the act of gratitude... and then to give thanks for the opportunity to experience that gratitude... to whomever or whatever that thing may be. While the concept and act of gratitude is no stranger to many people, the mindfulness of it perhaps may be.

Following the presentation (Steve was sitting at my table with a few others) the meeting quickly adjourned and we fell into discussion. After we thanked him for the presentation, Steve turned to me and asked "What do you do to remind yourself to be grateful?" and I felt frozen. All eyes at the table turn upon me and I suddenly felt my mind go blank. When *was* the last time I reminded myself to be grateful? Certainly I had been so lately... even earlier today I had expressed my thanks to a friend just for being that. But am I actively *doing* anything to maintain gratefulness as a part of my life and well being? Am I simply floating along my path and allowing random moments of thankfulness to occur to me instead of seeking them out in my life (and it truly isn't that hard) and paying homage to them? What would happen if I did? Would I become a better friend? A better lover? A better daughter, sister, niece, or companion to my dog? What would happen if I were consciously active in regarding the gratitude I have for my massage therapy practice? For every client who walks in and out the door? Have I been *consciously* grateful for the moments of time in which a person allows me the honour of facilitating their path to healing or for the simple act of being and touching and soothing?

It's incredibly easy to get caught up in the day to day running of a business... booking clients, keeping notes, doing taxes, folding sheets, marketing, writing reports. It's the day to day thrum of activity which becomes the rhythm of our days that we begin to perhaps view as being tedious or monotonous. We lose sight of what is truly meaningful and forget to incorporate simple acts of mindfulness in our practices.

Gratitude has the power of potential behind it. The potential to become excited, to appreciate, to acknowledge and to actively give thanks for the things which create the fabric of our lives... for without them we might be destitute, starving, and alone. Gratitude has the ability to weave magic back into our existence. *Acknowledging* your gratitude has the power of attraction behind it. Like attracts like... be grateful for what you have, pay attention to it, and actively give thanks to someone or something and more things to be grateful for will come to you and those whose lives you touch. A simple act like switching a ring from one finger to another might be all it takes to remind us of that.



Why assess?

Daphne Calhoun-Majaess BPE, RMT

I have been an instructor at private massage therapy colleges (2200 hour programs) within NS for the past 11 years and I cannot recall a year where I haven't been asked "Why do we have to assess?". My response to that follows:

Firstly, it is part of our scope of practice. We not only treat the soft tissues and joints of the body but we also assess them. This is stated in our scope of practice:

"The practice of massage therapy is the assessment of the soft tissues and joints of the body and the treatment and prevention of dysfunction, injury, pain and physical disorders of the soft tissues and joints primarily by manipulation to develop, maintain, rehabilitate or augment physical function, to relieve pain and promote health."

Secondly, how are you going to treat the soft tissues and joints if you don't know what the source of the complaint is? Yes, the history should ultimately provide us with a working theory, but it is our assessments that support or refute our initial impressions. There is so much overlap within musculoskeletal conditions that you cannot make plan of management decisions based upon how the client describes his/her complaint. Most clients are not knowledgeable about the anatomy of the body. They know that they are experiencing pain and discomfort and they have sought you out for "why" they are hurting. They are looking to you for the answers! Are we meeting the best interests of our clients if we are not conducting an assessment?

Assessment skills are a systematic method for gathering information about our client to make informed decisions about how we are going to proceed with treatment ... with the frequency of care ... with remedial exercises ... with home-care. I often hear the following: "I do my assessment once the client gets on the table." Well, yes, of course the therapist is continually assessing during treatment, but how do you know where to start? A client can present with a shoulder pain that could very well be coming from a source not within the shoulder. Perhaps a referral from an organ. Perhaps it could be due to fascial restrictions from the pelvis. If you treat symptomatically, you may not always end up successfully managing the true cause. Might the client feel better after the treatment? Perhaps, but it is just as likely that the pain would return soon thereafter.

Massage therapy has come a long way over the last decade and we are continuing to gain acknowledgement of our skills from both the medical communities and general public. A growing body of evidence-based research continues to support the role massage therapy has to play in the health-care domain. As such, more than ever before, the massage therapist has increased responsibility to systematically evaluate their clients. Let's face it, third-party payers want to know why your client needs our services.

Just ask yourself: If questioned, could you provide a third party (ie. insurance company, family physician) with evidence that rationalizes your management of each and every one of your clients?



Massage Emergency Response Team (MERT)

Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency is looking for interested individuals to join a volunteer MERT team. Selected members will be provided with appropriate training and courses to be able to respond and treat emergency response members in the event of a major incident or disaster.

If you are interested in becoming a member of our MERT team please submit your name and contact information by Feb 12, 2011 to annettestherapeuticmassage@gmail.com

First meeting and training will be on March 6, 2011, at 0900-1200.

Comments, Feedback, Articles

Please see page 3 for the deadline dates for our next issue. I would love to hear from you with ideas, articles, etc.

Cheers Daphne