The power and importance of abstracts

In this issue of JBMT (19:4), and the next, issue (20:1), we are publishing a number of selected abstracts from the 4th International Fascia Congress, Washington DC, September 2015.

These have been chosen from those selected by the Scientific Committee of the Congress, for poster or oral presentation.

JBMT has awarded cash prizes of $1000 and $500 respectively, to two of the abstracts, judged by JBMT's Editorial team of Associate Editors, as having the greatest clinical relevance.

- 1st prize was awarded to Shihfan J. Tu PT, Roger Woledge PhD and Dylan Morrissey PhD, from London U.K., the authors of Measurement of the Effects of 'Kinesio-Taping' in Vivo Thoracolumbar Fascia Movement Using Ultrasound: Method Development and Observational Study.
- 2nd prize was awarded to Chicago based Paul Mettler PT DPT, Jeffrey Schroder PT, DPT and Catherine Kleinmuntz PhD, for their abstract titled: Use of High Frequency Shear Wave Elastography To Identify & Evaluate Treatment of Fascial Adhesions

What these abstracts have in common is a clinical relevance and usefulness — epitomized by the ability to accurately visualize, measure and monitor — using ultrasound and sonoeastonography imaging — changes in tissue behavior in response to different methods of treatment.

The assessment methods used in these abstracts represent a trend that JBMT applauds, and wishes to encourage.

Abstracts — those selected for publication in JBMT as well as the many others for which there was not sufficient space — offer compact detail of important findings.

Many of the Fascia Congress abstracts have been, or are being, expanded into full papers, for publication in JBMT, or elsewhere — however it is the richness of information, located in a minimal amount of text, that makes abstracts so powerful and useful, and deserving of study.

Examples of the novel information, to be found in some of the abstracts that we have selected for publication, include:

- Dennenmoser S et al. Clinical mechanistic research: Manual and movement therapy directed at fascia electrical impedance and Sonoelastography as a tool for the examination of changes in lumbar fascia after tissue manipulation.
  Among the findings reported in this abstract is evidence based on sonoeastonography and electrical impedance measurements that, following 'tissue manipulation' (Rolfing-style myofascial release) of the tissues of the low back (muscles and thoracolumbar fascia) these 'soften', and reduce in their hydration. What is surprising, and clinically significant, is evidence that these tissues react differently, depending on the gender, age, pain-history and activity-level of the person.

  In this report the effects of self-applied, tool-assisted, treatment, was evaluated. "30 young men performed a self-help treatment with the fascia tool Fascia-Releazer (myofascial release tool combined with a vibrational oscillation) on the right thigh for 8 min"
  Among the instruments used in assessment were the Myoton-Pro, to measure elasticity and stiffness, and BIA 101 Anniversary SE, to measure hydration. There were significant changes in stiffness (decreased), elasticity, hydration and temperature (all increased).
  A surprising feature of this study relates to the apparent increase in elasticity, as well as increased hydration of the tissues. These findings contrast with those of Dennenmoser et al. (above), where reduced hydration corresponded with increased elasticity.
  Did the 'speed' of tissue change (the type of treatment varied from strong friction, to slow myofascial release) as well as temperature of the tissues, produce these contradictory changes?

- Price K et al. Gait improvement in children with cerebral palsy after Myofascial Structural Integration (MSI) therapy.
  "MSI treatment was associated with increased foot length on the affected side, and a trend toward
reduction in heel-to-heel base of support. We interpreted increased foot length on the affected side as an increase in the amount of contact with the mat, reduction in toe walking, and progress toward heel strike. This change was maintained three months after treatment ended."

These follow-up benefits are a gratifying aspect of this study that involved 28 children, 4 years and under, with mild-to-moderate spastic hemiplegic Cerebral Palsy.

Margulis R Borrero M Treating myofascial pain in nickel-sensitive women exposed to nickel alloy underwires in brassieres: Clinical case observations.

"A retrospective chart review of 57 consecutive new female patients at least 14 years of age, treated in a NJ myofascial pain practice, showed that in 24 of the 57 women, fascial pulls were tracked from the site of pain to palpable and painful adhesions deep to underwire brassiere support wires. Underwire adhesions were shown to be common in the population of women presenting at a myofascial pain clinic."

Treatment involved massage of adhesions located deep to underwire brassiere rim wires, until glide was restored in the fascia. "Patients were asked to wear wire-free brassieres and to practice daily self-massage of adhesions in the shower until local pain disappeared."

This ‘low-tech’ approach contrasts with many other abstract reports, where expensive, highly technical, instruments are used. The implications for the female population of the information gleaned from this abstract are enormous. Abstracts are important sources of new information and data, and we hope those selected for JBMT publication will encourage readers to consider undertaking studies that expand on this process.

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