

Can the life be put back in fascia? Investigating fascia as a real-time, autogenic process in a phenomenological approach to connective tissue research.

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BACKGROUND Fascia has been described as an organ of form [1] however it has been shown to be an organ of process [2, 3]. Despite both statements being true it could be argued there has been a polarisation in fascia research towards a reductionist approach. The question remains how does fascia behave *in vivo* as living biological phenomena? This research outlines for the first time a novel technique called the Integra Method which aims to address this issue. **METHODS** Spanning 13 years, this empirical self-study may describe a perpetual, real-time, whole-body neurobiological response [4] as an 'autogenic' process [5]. In other words the phenomenon is experienced as being self-generating. The Integra Method itself is generated autonomously. The technique's development started through the detailed application of specific breathing and kinaesthetic responses to spontaneous involuntary, whole-body movements. It is innate as breathing, but independent of it and consciously experienced as a continual internal dynamic process that occurs alongside 'being'. Using a longitudinal design, photographic and video data has been collected of the author's functional and morphological bodily changes. A detailed reflective diary was kept, capturing the narrative aspects throughout the experience marking significant psychological and physical events. **RESULTS** Some of the observations noted were structural changes to the frame of the body such as softened muscular contours, apparent lengthening of the limbs and the lessening of a barrel-chest. Of significance there was a re-establishment of joint integrity from an unstable recurrent dislocated shoulder, reverse changes of hallux valgus, pes planus and chronic winging scapulae. Additionally noted was progressive ease in joint range of movement, with overall reduced pain and improved wellbeing. **CONCLUSIONS** The Integra Method is a complementary approach to fascia research and a technique that can be taught to therapists, researchers or laypersons. It posits the individual researcher at the heart of the investigative process who could experience fascia as a living autogenic process. These results might shed further understanding of how the body's self-generating capacity formulates favourable environments to manage disease, dysfunction and influence structure. Potentially utilising new technologies (4D scanner Aplio™ 500) the Integra Method can explore how fascia behaves *in vivo* and thus bridge the gap between the biological dynamics of dead versus living tissue. **STATEMENT** The human subject used in this research was the author and there were no known breaches of any regional ethical policies.

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