

Moving Forward



A newsletter for providers serving those in pain

Measuring Motor Control and Pain: Believe it!

Research has identified influence on motor control and postural response by pain that is determined by the beliefs of the patient about pain. This has implications for treatment concepts on fear-avoidance behavior, successful rehabilitation, and indication of risk factors for future back problems.

“Patients with low back pain demonstrate decreased variability in postural responses.”

Patients with low back pain demonstrate decreased variability in postural responses. A recent study has demonstrated that this is related to the patients beliefs about back pain. This has some large implications for rehabilitating this population.



What do beliefs have to do with pain?

Research repeatedly has demonstrated significant impact of belief about pain on disability and risk of developing a chronic problem.

3. *Beliefs about back pain delineated those in whom variability recovered spontaneously from those in whom it did not.*

What does this new study demonstrate?

4. *Longstanding reduction in postural variation may pose increased risk of future back problems.*

1. *Pain reduced postural response variability in the group of subjects.*
2. *This loss of variability is indicative of protective strategies to reduce torque of back movement*

Other studies in this series demonstrated that:

Education on pain changed beliefs and improved pain and movement.



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Implications for treatment.

There are many ways to change beliefs about pain for the better.

Explain Pain: This concept of educating on pain neurophysiology has support by both basic science and clinical trials published in peer reviewed literature.

Movement therapy: While explaining pain helps to reduce the threat level of pain research has shown that, in order to reduce disability movement must be incorporated. This serves to restore movement variability as well as confidence in movement.

Manual therapy: One of the easiest ways to reduce threat value of a movement is to reduce the pain associated with it. Manual therapy that engages active mechanisms from the patient are an excellent way to reduce pain that carries over to movement therapy.

This approach at Forward Motion

I like to break down my approach to pain resolution into three steps using the concepts just described.

- Feel better
- Move better
- Move more

Various forms of feedback are utilized including visual, tactile, and verbal. This assists in movement awareness and therefore expression of movement.

As always, treatments are provided one on one and extend to a simple home exercise program catered to establish self reliance.

Moseley GL, Hodges PW (2006). Reduced Variability of Postural Strategy Prevents Normalization of Motor Changes Induced by Back Pain: A Risk Factor for Chronic Trouble? *Behavioral Neuroscience* 120(2) 474-476

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