

Highlights from the Second International Fascia Research Congress

A Meeting of Hands and Minds, Clinicians and Scientists

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First of all, don't miss the next Fascia Research Congress (FRC) in Vancouver in 2012! This congress, a unique environment that brings together clinicians and scientists, should be a requirement for anyone who speaks about fascia, works with fascia, or teaches work connected with it – or for anyone interested in learning the language of science and research about our work. Around thirty of us from the Rolf Institute® of Structural Integration, out of 550 attendees from 40 countries, were fortunate to attend the Second International FRC in Amsterdam in October 2009, and to listen to four days of top scientists speaking on topics like:

- What happens, and at which layer of connective tissue (CT), with injury or immobility?
- What are the effects of load and remodeling on viscous components in the loose CT?
- How different are the forces of tension at proximal and distal tendons?
- How much force is really needed to change and affect different layers of fascia?
- Looking at surgical implications of the fascial surroundings to muscle surgeries
- Fascia and cancer surgery
- Compromised fascial continuity and its contributions to problems elsewhere
- Architectural anatomy as opposed to dissection anatomy

- The relationship of fascia and proprioception
- Fascia as a sensory organ
- The effect of the crural fascia on promoting action such as propulsion and medial/lateral stability
- Effect of inflammation on CT

Dr. Rolf always spoke of the need to verbalize the science behind our work in operational language and often quoted Korzybski in this context. Many Rolfers may not want to “be” scientists, but this ongoing congress gives us a chance to become educated in the language and thinking of science.

Robert Schleip – Certified Advanced Rolfer, Rolfing faculty member, and scientist – represented structural integration in one presentation, showing photos of Dr. Rolf and speaking of her work with fascia and its relationship to gravity. Tom Findley – Certified Advanced Rolfer, chair and organizer of the FRC – gave a great talk on why we should care about research and writing research grants. One would find it hard to leave this packed conference not understanding the essential role science plays for our practices: it validates our work; it improves our treatments, our efficiency and our effectiveness; it improves our teaching; it improves our ability to think and speak clearly with meaningful language about what we do; it changes our touch when what we “think” we are doing is clarified and validated by gorgeous

visuals of the fascial sleeve, its connections and its response to life's imprinting.

Detailed state of the art ultrasounds, MRIs and spectacular electronic microscopic photos of fascia were abundant to underscore the important roles fascia plays in all systems of the human body. We saw the sarcomeres, fascial fibers, tendons, aponeuroses, and tubules that we feel under our hands. We already knew they were there; however, to see the reality of what we say we do validated, discussed, criticized, and spoken of in a language that is precise and operational would make Dr. Rolf and Korzybski quite happy. Another validation of Dr. Rolf's thinking was when we heard a plastic surgeon call for all surgeons to begin to respectfully address the continuity of the CT in surgical procedures.

The FRC also offered important dialogue between clinicians and scientists. Clinicians presented to scientists about what we do and what we need them to study for us. The scientists listened to the practitioners and spoke to what they thought about the work we all do and how we might think differently about what we think we are doing. Chiropractors, osteopaths, research scientists, physical therapists, plastic surgeons, orthopedic doctors, physiologists, anatomists, structural integrators, massage therapists, Bowenwork® practitioners, homeopaths, and acupuncturists all came together on breaks to discuss every aspect of their work with fascia. We came from Poland, Finland, Norway, Turkey, Scotland, Israel, Italy Ireland, Portugal, England, China, Korea, Australia, Canada, Germany, France, Japan, Russia, Spain, the Czech Republic, the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the Netherlands.

The congress challenged all of us to begin to think and speak clearly, question our work, and excite our minds to study and propose our hypotheses on why it works the way it works. Returning to our practices, our hands have new realizations, and our ability to speak and think about our work is clearer and stronger. Hopefully in 2012 some of our members will present their studies or papers on structural integration.

The research articles and abstracts from the Congress have been published as *Fascia Research II* (ISBN 978-3-437-55022-5), available from www.fasciacongress.org/2009/dvd-book-purchase.htm. DVDs are scheduled for release in December 2009. These would be valuable additions to the library of any CT specialist.