The Mesentery; Re-Mapping Visceral Fascia to Improve Outcomes
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Background: The mesentery is a continuous, folded band of membranous connective tissue attached to the posterior wall of the abdomen, enclosing the digestive organs and viscera. In 2017 the British medical journal The Lancet published findings of Pr. Calvin Coffee and his research team classifying the mesentery as a new organ, research that has changed our understanding of its physiological function and anatomical attachments that offer improved surgical outcomes. A previous osteopathic double-blind research study by the author has demonstrated that manual intervention on the mesenteric root can increase spinal mobility and reduce postural energy expenditure.

Purpose: The purpose of this poster was to review relevant literature, present the latest understanding of visceral and connective tissue anatomy of the mesentery, and relate these findings to improving outcomes in diverse fields from osteopathy to body work or movement-based activates.

Methods: Data base literature review of peer-reviewed research publications based on cadaver studies and 3D modeling.

Findings and Discussion: Since our understanding of mesenteric anatomy was, until recently, incorrect, our comprehension of its function was undeveloped and elementary. This research represents a continuous mesentery as an important component of anatomical connectivity, in the gastrointestinal system in particular, but also in the body in general. One of its specialized functions, suspending a contractile intestine within the peritoneal cavity (avoiding direct contact with the abdominal wall) while simultaneously maintaining systemic connectivity between intestine and the body, underlines the mesentery’s functional duality of both mobility and stability that need to be maintained to improve outcomes. The recent discoveries by the research team led by Pr. Coffee offer far-reaching implications in diverse fields, and in both medicine and preventative care.

Conclusion: This poster proposes fundamental insights into the anatomy and potential treatment outcomes based of this newly classified organ. It invites us to re-think issues as varied as movement-based activities or osteopathic and manual therapy.

References

