

Posturology at the service of mass physiotherapy

Author: prof. Daniele **RAGGI**

Degree in Sport Science, Physiotherapist, Posturologist, Mézières practitioner. Lecturer in Posturology c/o School of Medicine (Department of Experimental Medicine and Pathology), Università "La Sapienza" in Rome and c/o School of Sport Science, Università Cattolica in Milan. Director of Posturalmed (Posturology studio) in Milan.

Why dealing with posture?

Posture is a phenomenon involving all of us in each moment of our life, both private and professional. In addition, it involves many branches of medicine, and for that reason it has been recognized as "transversal branch of medicine".

For a mass physiotherapist it is extremely interesting and helping to know the principles of posturology and of those tools it employs for a **practical use**.

Before analyzing the three concepts of *posture*, *correct posture* and *altered posture*, I would like to share a personal aphorism that I often use: "*Life forms and deforms our body.*"

This sentence, matured thanks to the daily experience of twenty years of activity, completes the revolutionary affirmation of the world-wide known French therapist Françoise Mézières: "All of us were born beautiful and well made..." (she also wrote a book with this title). Why then do we notice that we change over the years? Because life, with its facts, traumas, pains and all the tests it put us through, forces us to continuously adapt and this is testified by "*adaptive postures*". Here is the definition that most fits the concept of posture: the way a person relates to the world, stand, manage gravity in any moment, breath, do activity or rest. Each of us, in any situation and in any moment of our life, assumes a posture that can be correct or altered.

With *correct posture* we intend the situation in which the body manages its relations, communication, both verbal and non-verbal, and the daily gestures in the most economical and profitable possible way. It is easy, at this point, to define an *altered posture*. Imagine people who experienced a sprain in their ankle; in order not to feel pain or to reduce it to an acceptable level, they will try not to load up the weight on that foot, yet striving to stay efficient. They will then adopt gestures like limping, keeping the pelvis lightly lifted on the painful side, using shoulders to help the walking, etc. This means the body will adopt an *adaptive compensative scheme*. If such scheme is maintained for a long time, due to a question of body economy, the body will tend to fix such attitudes through its muscular and connective components.

One of the aims of posturology is to dismantle the old adaptive schemes that result fixed. If these are not dismantled, restoring the ankle mobility will just partially work, since the patient will always tend to use those same schemes and attitudes it had adopted when it was in pain.

But how can these schemes remain in use even after the functional restoration of the interested area, i.e. the ankle, the primary cause? Can a postural alteration caused by a trauma become in turn cause of new articular problems somewhere else?

The reason why it is fundamental to restore, apart from the ankle functionality in this case, also a correct posture is that any joint not working for the tasks its physiology is made to fulfill efficiently will inevitably suffer from arthritis, inflammations, capsulitis, bursitis, tendinitis, dislocations, cartilage usury, etc.

Which is the factor that continues keeping posture out of its correct axis, even once the function of the primary cause has been restored?

It is the connective tissue. With its fibrotic components, in fact, it tends to fix those situations resulting permanent for a period of time. If a tibial or a peroneal muscle has kept an antalgic posture for fifteen-twenty days, the connective tissue will tend to fix the sarcomeres in a short position, and therefore to maintain that specific position which prevent the foot from touching the ground. The dynamics behind this mechanism is very similar to the one you get when you hit the first bowling pin of the line and the other ones follow consequently. In the same way, any other muscle adjusts itself triggering a chain reaction that involves the pelvis, the lumbar region, the shoulders, the cervical region, etc. So muscular chains result shortened and our body results fixed in an antalgic but also altered posture.

People working in the sector of functional restoration who use a global approach dealing with posture know very well how important it is to work on the muscular chains. And how much a body reacts, due to an antalgic attitude, any time therapists try to dismantle an "old adapted posture" assumed in the past.

Why does the body react against annoyances and pain, even when these are caused aiming to give it back an adequate function? Because all body cells are programmed not to suffer. It does not matter if the pain is caused for a short period and with good purposes; body tends to escape from the pain as an innate mechanism of survival. All it wants is not to suffer today, without caring about what will happen tomorrow. Posturology can intervene in this sense with really interesting results. As a matter of fact, not only can we speak about results on the pain, but also improvements in the performance, both in healthy people and professional athletes.

For more information on the Raggi Method®- Pancafit® please address to Posturalmed S.A.

Tel. +39 0239257427 or +39 0239265686

- Fax +39 0239200420

Email: corsi@posturalmed.com

Website: www.posturalmed.com