Mental Imagery for Boosting Human Performance: From Parkinson Disease to Dance

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Cognitive strategies are core to human performance. Mental imagery (MI) is one such approach with demonstrated effectiveness on motor and non-motor aspects of performance. In this talk, I will provide a brief overview of MI and its relevance for human motor and non-motor performance. I will then present findings from my research into MI for people with Parkinson disease and dancers, while focusing on its effects on motor control and execution and on cognitive functioning. Lastly, I will discuss suggested mechanisms of effect and present findings related to body schema.

Amit Abraham is a musculoskeletal physical therapist and a faculty member (tenure track) at the Department of Physical Therapy, Faculty of Health Sciences, at Ariel University (Israel). His research focuses on mental imagery approaches (motor imagery, dynamic neurocognitive imagery, Gaga movement language) and their benefits on motor and cognitive performance in people with Parkinson disease, dancers, and athletes. Dr. Abraham holds a Bachelor in Physical Therapy from Tel-Aviv University (Israel), a Master’s Degree in Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy from The University of Queensland (Australia), and a Ph.D. in Physical Therapy from the University of Haifa (Israel). Dr. Abraham completed his post-doctoral training at Emory University School of Medicine (USA) and served as an adjunct assistant professor at the Department of Kinesiology, The University of Georgia (USA).