

Mental practice for chronic pain in people with spinal cord injury: A systematic review.

In addition to the sensorimotor damage, a spinal cord injury (SCI) can be complicated by various disorders including pain, which could be directly related to the SCI.

More than half of people with SCI report chronic pain, which has a significant impact on rehabilitation, activities of daily living, emotions and quality of life of the individual.

The treatment of chronic pain remains challenging. Among non-pharmacological treatments, studies have shown the contribution of the motor cortex stimulation. In particular, its effect has been demonstrated for the treatment of neuropathic pain in individuals with SCI.

There are several techniques for modulating brain plasticity and one of them is mental practice (MP) as adjunct therapy. Recent studies have explored the effects of MP on locomotion and pain in people with SCI. While MP generally results in improved movement, the effect of MP on neuropathic pain remains uncertain with heterogeneous results and up-to-date there is no systematic review synthesizing these studies. This is the goal of this systematic review project based on a protocol¹.

¹ Opsommer, E., & Korogod, N. (2017). Mental practice for chronic pain in people with spinal cord injury: a systematic review protocol. JBI Database of Systematic Reviews Implementation Reports, 15(8) 2004-2012. doi: 10.11124/JBISRI-2016-003149.

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