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Trunk motion analysis: a systematic review from a clinical and methodological perspective

Stefano NEGRINI ^{1,2}, Barbara PIOVANELLI ², Cinzia AMICI ³, Valter CAPPELLINI ³, Gabriele BOVI ², Maurizio FERRARIN ², Fabio ZAINA ⁴, Alberto BORBONI ³

¹ Department of Clinical and Experimental Sciences, University of Brescia, Brescia, Italy; ² IRCCS Fondazione Don Carlo Gnocchi ONLUS, Milan, Italy; ³ Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, University of Brescia, Brescia, Italy; ⁴ ISICO (Italian Scientific Spine Institute), Milan, Italy

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INTRODUCTION: This systematic literature review aims to check the current state of affairs of non-gait-related optoelectronic trunk movement analysis; results have been analyzed from a clinical and a methodological perspective.

EVIDENCE ACQUISITION: Extensive research was performed on all papers published until December 31st, 2015, dealing with trunk movement analysis assessed by optoelectronic systems, excluding those related to gait. The research was performed on the 14th of January 2016 on three databases: Scopus, Science Direct and Pubmed. A reference search and expert consultation were also performed.

EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS: Out of a total number of 8431 papers, 45 were deemed relevant: they included 1334 participants, 57.9% healthy, with age range 8-85. Few studies considered the whole trunk, and none focused on each vertebra independently: the trunk was almost always divided into three segments. Thirteen studies included 20 or more markers. Most of the papers focused mainly on the biomechanics of various movements; the lumbar area and low back pain were the most studied region and pathology respectively.

CONCLUSIONS: This study has shown the relative scarcity of current literature focusing on trunk motion analysis. In clinical terms, results were sparse. The only quite well represented group of papers focused on the lumbar spine and



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pathologies, but the scarcity of individuals evaluated make the results questionable. The use of optoelectronic systems in the evaluation of spine movement is a growing research area. Nevertheless, no standard protocols have been developed so far. Future research is needed to define a precise protocol in terms of number and position of markers along the spine and movements and tasks to be evaluated.

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