

Top ten things about embryology that are useful for biodynamic cst practice
Steve Haines June 2010

Conception and in utero events can leave an echo in the developing person

Quality of field at conception (eg drunk or aggressive or love).
Stress and toxicity affect development.

How it supports practice: The whole system may still resonate with experiences present in the field as the individual form was created.

Outer cell mass/trophoblast as the biosphere

Three cavities: chorionic, yolk sac, amniotic.
Extraembryonic support tissues.

How it supports practice: Can orient to a bigger space around the body and root that perception in the knowledge that our bodies grew surrounded by tissues with our own genome.

Spatially ordered metabolic fields

Fluid fields.
Relationships in space determine development.
The embryo as a fluid membranous whole.

Blebschmidt accounts for the morphology of the growing embryo using spatially ordered metabolic fields.

How it supports practice: In biodynamic practice the body is commonly experienced as a dynamic fluid whole. We can get a felt sense of the body as amoeba, expanding and contacting in response to experience with an internal fluid information exchange. A surging, streaming, bag of protoplasm.

Ignition dynamics

Surges of potency at different stages of development (plus sparking up of three centres at birth).
Conception.
Heart beating.
Laying down of the neural tube.

Ignition in the third ventricle in the neural cavity, the heart in the thoracic cavity and the umbilicus in the abdominal cavity.

How it supports practice: Orienting to potency spreading from the three major ignition centres into their surrounding cavities is an extremely powerful orientation. Often one of the ignition centres feels relatively dampened down. Ignition can be perceived as the emergence of coherence and order.

Germ layers

Retain coherent identity in the adult.
Ectoderm, mesoderm and endoderm.
Neural crest cells as fourth germ layer.

How it supports practice: Structures that grew together can be treated together. Appreciating the mesoderm roots of all connective tissues helps understand and perceive the unified felt sense of fascia and membranes, for example.

Midline

Primitive streak and the notochord.
The end of the notochord as a still organising centre for the midline and all generation of form.
Symmetry.
Somites form in relationship to the midline. Structures that grew from and around the somites (myotomes, bones, dermatomes, nerves) maintain a segment identity with the nucleus pulposus as the natural fulcrum.

How it supports practice: The midline is the natural fulcrum for the generation of all form. The continuity and clarity of the midline dynamics is a key indicator of health. Any structure coming back into relationship to the midline is a clear sign of a shift towards health. The practitioners own midline is a powerful orientation as the practitioner attempts to stay present.

A fluid filled neural tube that bends and folds

Curling forward of the whole embryo is lead by the neural tube.
Growing brain imprints on the cranial base and stretches the vault bones.
Curling and uncurling of the neural tube is oriented to the lamina terminalis.
The shape of the ventricles arises from the morphology of the neural tube.

How it supports practice: The felt sense of a fluid filled tube is a central experience in orienting to the nervous system. The movements and coherent identities of the cranial bones and reciprocal tension membranes only make sense if understood from an embryological perspective.

Nourishment via the umbilicus

The umbilicus as a fulcrum for relationship.
Ignition through the umbilicus.

How it supports practice: The umbilicus is a still organising centre for the whole person. It holds defining dynamics around being in relationship.

Organs dynamics are determined by how they grew in the embryo

The folding of the organs in mesentery.
Gut as a tube with organs that bud off the tube.
Expansion of the heart.
Anticlockwise rotation of the small and large intestines.
Rolling up and to the right of the liver. The combined translocation of the liver and stomach.

How it supports practice: Mobility of the organs is much clearer to palpate and can be understood more easily if the growth movements during embryology are included in the perceptual process.

Branchial arches as horizontal fluid fields

The formation of the face.
Cranial nerve ganglions.
Expression and the social nervous system described by Porges.

How it supports practice: Orienting to the branchial arches reveals the underlying dynamics of the formation of the facial complex and the throat. It explains the usefulness of working with the whole package of nerves, muscles and tissues that grew from the branchial arches. Very helpful in downregulating overwhelm responses, supporting the vagal brake and working with cranial nerves.