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皮膚感覚と心

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The Relationship of Skin Sense and Mind

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Abstract

The skin has been explored in various fields such as physiology, neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy. However, considering its multi-layered functions, it will be ideal to study the skin on multidisciplinary arena. The tactile sensation captured by the skin has unique characteristics compared to other four types of senses among the five senses. Tactile sensation is perceived as reality, reciprocity, sense of unity, and as an interoception. Therefore, if touching is applied to contact with other people, it is possible to quickly build an intimate relationship. Interestingly, self-touch has the effect of directing one's inner consciousness and has characteristics that are different from what is produced by touching others. The skin has tactile nerves that produce sense of pleasure, which respond only to touches applied at a slow speed of about 3 cm to 10 cm per second. When this nerve ignites, oxytocin is secreted in the brain. Oxytocin has various roles that contribute to physical and mental health, such as relieving stress reactions and promoting fat metabolism. One can even promote oxytocin secretion by oneself. Oxytocin is secreted by physical contact, volunteer activities, and enjoying the five senses and so on. Recently, it has been known that oxytocin affect not only general health but also life expectancy. Due to various difficulties caused by COVID-19, the secretion of oxytocin is suppressed in people in general, and especially women are suffering from its adverse effects.

Key words: skin sense, oxytocin, c-tactile afferents, touching.