Autotopagnosia

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Definition

Disturbance of body schema involving the loss of ability to localize, recognize, or identify the specific parts of one's body.

Current Knowledge

While some reported cases exhibit impaired knowledge of most body parts, autotopagnosia is most frequently manifested as difficulty in identifying or naming specific fingers (*finger agnosia*), especially the three middle fingers. The problem extends to identifying comparable body parts on the examiner or graphic representations of body parts. The deficit usually involves both sides of the body, thus distinguishing it from unilateral neglect. While not typically classified as such, *right-left disorientation* likely reflects another

form or subtype of autotopagnosia. In this condition, patients are unable to reliably identify the right and left sides of their bodies or those of others. Both finger agnosia and right-left disorientation are frequently present at the same time, particularly following lesions of the left angular gyrus and may be a part of what has been defined as Gerstmann's syndrome. The latter would also include deficits in writing (agraphia) and arithmetical operations (acalculia).

Cross-References

- [Finger Agnosia](#)
- [Gerstmann's Syndrome](#)
- [Right-Left Disorientation](#)

References and Readings

- Benton, A. L., & Sivan, A. B. (1993). Disturbances of the body schema. In K. M. Heilman & E. Valenstein (Eds.), *Clinical neuropsychology* (pp. 123–140). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Denberg, N. L., & Tranel, D. (2003). Acalculia and disturbances of the body schema. In K. M. Heilman & E. Valenstein (Eds.), *Clinical neuropsychology* (pp. 161–184). New York: Oxford University Press.