УДК [61+615.1] (043.2)
ББК 5+52.81
А 43
ISBN 978-985-21-1864-4

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THE CORPUS CALLOSUM AND HEMISPHERIC DISCONNECTION: A NEUROANATOMICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SPLIT-BRAIN SYNDROME

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The human brain operates as a cohesive system, seamlessly integrating perception, action, and cognition across both hemispheres; a unity largely orchestrated by the corpus callosum, the brain’s largest white matter commissure. Composed of over 200 million axons, it forms a dense bridge between the hemispheres, facilitating real time exchange of sensory, motor, and cognitive information. When this structure is surgically severed or congenitally absent, the brain's hidden duality becomes unmasked, exposing the hemispheres' capacity to operate independently and revealing the functional specialization encoded within each side. The study of such cases, particularly through the lens of split-brain research pioneered by Sperry and Gazzaniga, has not only deepened our understanding of lateralization but has also shed light on how anatomical connectivity governs unified consciousness.

This study aims to anatomically and biophysically examine the corpus callosum, illustrating how its structure determines the efficiency of interhemispheric conduction. This analysis is particularly relevant in the context of neurological conditions and post-surgical syndromes that disrupt this communication, such as epilepsy-managed callosotomy, (Gazzaniga, 2019). By understanding how form translates into function or dysfunction, we gain insight into both normal brain integration and pathological dissociation (Paul et al., 2016).

Data were drawn from recent peer-reviewed publications sourced via PubMed, Google Scholar and Radiopedia focusing on axonal architecture, myelination patterns, and conduction properties across different callosal regions. Tractography and structural MRI analyses were particularly valuable for visualizing partial agenesis cases, revealing compensatory reorganization of remaining interhemispheric pathways (Paul et al., 2016). Diffusion imaging further confirmed the splenium's distinctive microstructure through elevated fractional anisotropy measures (Blaauw, Meiners., 2020).

The corpus callosum is topographically divided: the genu (anterior) links the prefrontal cortices with small caliber, thinly myelinated axons that favor integration over speed; the body connects motor and sensory areas with intermediate fibers; and the splenium (posterior) bridges visual and parietal cortices using large-diameter, heavily myelinated axons optimized for rapid transmission. Splenial fibers exhibit up to three times thicker myelination and 1.7 times larger diameters than those in the genu - biophysical adaptations that align with principles of cable theory, which posits that increased axon diameter and myelin thickness enhance signal propagation efficiency (Goldwyn, Rinzel., 2016). These structural specializations reflect the functional diversity of callosal regions and their roles in integrating complex sensorimotor and cognitive functions (Innocenti et al., 2022).

On a clinical level, callosotomy patients often present with Alien Hand Syndrome, intermanual conflict, visual-verbal disconnection, and compromised bimanual coordination. A 2019 study by Sperry et al. documented persistent tactile anomia and object misidentification in post-callosotomy subjects, further underlining how callosal sectioning fractures the unity of sensory perception and language access. These findings highlight the indispensable role of the corpus callosum in maintaining cross-hemispheric coherence, both behaviorally and neurologically.

In conclusion, the corpus callosum is more than a physical bridge; it is the neuroanatomical foundation of unified cognition. Its disruption reveals the elegance and fragility of interhemispheric integration. By merging structural detail with clinical evidence, this study reinforces the corpus callosum’s centrality in neuroanatomy, with clear implications for surgical planning, neurological assessment, and our broader understanding of how the brain operates as a whole.