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Effects of abnormal muscle forces on prenatal joint morphogenesis in mice

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1 **Abstract**

2 Fetal movements are essential for normal development of the human skeleton. When fetal
3 movements are reduced or restricted, infants are at higher risk of developmental dysplasia of
4 the hip and arthrogyrosis (multiple joint contractures). Joint shape abnormalities have been
5 reported in mouse models with abnormal or absent musculature, but the effects on joint shape
6 in such models have not been quantified or characterised in detail. In this study, embryonic
7 mouse forelimbs and hindlimbs at a single developmental stage (Theiler Stage 23) with normal,
8 reduced or absent muscle were imaged in 3D. Skeletal rudiments were virtually segmented and
9 rigid image registration was used to reliably align rudiments with each other, enabling
10 repeatable assessment and measurement of joint shape differences between normal, reduced-
11 muscle and absent muscle groups. We demonstrate qualitatively and quantitatively that joint
12 shapes are differentially affected by a lack of, or reduction in, skeletal muscle, with the elbow
13 joint being the most affected of the major limb joints. Surprisingly, the effects of reduced
14 muscle were often more pronounced than those of absent skeletal muscle, indicating a complex
15 relationship between muscle mass and joint morphogenesis. These findings have relevance for
16 human developmental disorders of the skeleton in which abnormal fetal movements are
17 implicated, particularly developmental dysplasia of the hip and arthrogyrosis.

18 **Keywords**

19 Fetal movements, biomechanics, image registration, mouse embryos, muscleless limbs,
20 reduced muscle, joint development, joint shape.

21 Introduction

22 Fetal movements are important for the development of healthy joints [reviewed in 1, 2], and
23 absent or abnormal fetal movements can lead to developmental skeletal abnormalities such as
24 developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) [1, 3] and arthrogyrosis [4]. DDH is a condition in
25 which the immature hip joint is unstable or dislocated [5], with an incidence of 1.3 per 1000
26 live births [6]. While a positive family history and female gender are risk factors associated
27 with the condition, the other major risk factors relate to the freedom of movement of the fetus.
28 For example, fetal breech position [7] and oligohydramnios (a reduction of amniotic fluid) [8]
29 increase the risk of DDH. Arthrogyrosis, a syndrome with multiple joint contractures, is
30 another developmental disorder associated with abnormal muscle activity and thus abnormal
31 movement *in utero* [9]. While a range of different genetic abnormalities may lead to
32 arthrogyrosis [4], abnormal fetal movements are common to all manifestations of the
33 syndrome [reviewed in 1]. Despite the clinical significance of fetal movements in joint
34 morphogenesis, their contribution to the emergence of shape of different joint types has not yet
35 been quantified.

36 While the very early stages of joint development occur independently of fetal movements [10,
37 11], numerous animal studies have described the importance of movement for morphogenesis
38 and cavitation of the joint [reviewed in 2, 12, 13, 14]. The most commonly used model systems
39 are pharmacologically immobilised chick and zebrafish embryos, zebrafish mutants and
40 genetically modified mouse lines in which skeletal muscle is reduced, absent or abnormal [15-
41 19]. Immobilised joints of developing chicks and mice fail to undergo cavitation [2, 3, 10, 13,
42 15], while a range of shape effects have been reported in zebrafish, chicks and mice including
43 simpler, smaller or malformed articular surfaces with absent or reduced muscle attachment
44 sites [13, 15, 16, 18, 19]. We previously showed that when fetal movements are absent in the
45 chick, early joint morphogenesis proceeds as normal up until the point at which joint cavitation
46 should occur, but that when cavitation does not occur, subsequent shape development of the

47 hip joint is abnormal [3]. There is an intriguing difference in skeletal development between
48 pharmacologically immobilised chicks and so-called “muscleless limb” genetically modified
49 mice. When spontaneous fetal movements are absent in chicks, all bones and synovial joints
50 seem to be affected to a similar degree [reviewed in 12], while in immobile mouse embryos,
51 the rudiments of the forelimb are more severely affected than those of the hindlimb [15]. For
52 example, cavitation and shape of the murine elbow joint is substantially disrupted by the
53 absence of skeletal muscle [10, 15], while the shape of the knee joint does not show obvious
54 abnormalities [15]. We have previously proposed that passive movements induced by activities
55 of the mother and healthy littermates may be compensating to some degree for the lack of
56 spontaneous movements in muscleless limb mice, with variable effects in different regions of
57 the limbs [20].

58 Although attempts to quantify shape change due to immobility have been made for the chick
59 knee joint [13, 21], no extensive quantitative assessment has been performed for multiple
60 joints, or for any joints of the paralysed developing mouse. It is challenging to perform
61 consistent, repeatable measurements on complex 3D shapes such as synovial joints, because it
62 is very difficult to ensure precise alignment prior to taking measurements. Image registration
63 is an approach that can resolve this challenge [22]. In this study, we perform rigid image
64 registration on 3D segmentations of long bone rudiments from genetically modified mouse
65 embryos with normal, reduced ($Myf5^{nlacZ/+}; Myod^{-/-}$), or absent limb muscle
66 ($Myf5^{nlacZ/nlacZ}; Myod^{-/-}$), to investigate the effects of muscle volume on the shape of the elbow,
67 shoulder, hip and knee joints. We focus on Theiler Stage (TS [23]) 23 at approximately
68 embryonic day (E) 14.5, when statistically significant effects on ossification due to reduced or
69 absent skeletal muscle are apparent in some rudiments but not in others [15]. The aim of this
70 study was to use image registration to reliably align rudiments of normal, reduced-muscle and
71 muscleless limbs, to systematically quantify the effects of reduced or absent muscle on the
72 shapes of the major synovial joints.

73 **Methods**

74 *Animal model and 3D data acquisition*

75 The data used for this study is a subset of the data described but not quantitatively analysed for
76 joint shape in a previous study [15] where double heterozygous $Myf5^{nlacZ/+};Myod^{+/-}$ mice were
77 interbred to generate E14.5 or E15.5 embryos, staged as developmental stage TS23. The control
78 genotypes included; wildtype, $Myf5^{nlacZ/+};Myod^{+/-}$, $Myf5^{nlacZ/+};Myod^{+/+}$ and $Myf5^{+/+};Myod^{+/-}$.
79 The reduced-muscle and the muscleless genotypes were $Myf5^{nlacZ/+};Myod^{-/-}$ and
80 $Myf5^{nlacZ/nlacZ};Myod^{-/-}$ respectively. Limbs were dissected, stained with Alcian blue and Alizarin
81 red, and scanned with Optical Projection Tomography as described previously [15]. 3D data of
82 reconstructed hindlimbs and forelimbs were used for analysis. All animal work followed the
83 guidelines of the Trinity College Dublin Bioresources Unit and Bioethics Committee.

84 *Image registration*

85 Each limb reconstruction was imported into Mimics (Materialise, Leuven, Belgium). A
86 minimum of five forelimbs and hindlimbs for each of the three groups (control, reduced-
87 muscle, muscleless) were successfully segmented and analysed, as reported in Table 1. The
88 scapula, humerus, radius and ulna were individually segmented for each forelimb, and the
89 pelvis, femur and tibia for the hindlimb. It was possible to reliably segment individual
90 rudiments even when the joints appeared to be fused, due to consistently reduced brightness in
91 the failed joint line. For each experimental group, segmented rudiments of the same type (e.g.,
92 all humeri) were orientated similarly using the ImageJ plugin TransformJ
93 (<http://rsbweb.nih.gov/ij/>, last accessed October 2018) [24, 25]. Image brightness within each
94 group was normalised with a MATLAB algorithm (version R2015a, The MathWorks, Inc.,
95 Natick, Massachusetts, United States). One rudiment in each group was selected as the target
96 image onto which others were orientated. All other rudiments were then rigidly registered to

97 the target and an “atlas” was created for each rudiment (scapula, humerus, radius, ulna) and
98 each group (control, reduced-muscle, muscleless) with the use of the Image Registration
99 Toolkit software [26] (IRTK, BioMedia, Imperial College London), as described previously
100 [27]. Further rigid registrations were performed to precisely align each of the three rudiment
101 atlases with each other, with the same manipulations then being applied to each individual
102 rudiment dataset. At the end of this process, each individual rudiment was precisely aligned
103 with all other rudiments for the three experimental groups. With seven rudiments interfacing
104 at the joints of interest and three experimental groups, a total of 21 atlases were created. To
105 visualise the differences in shape and size of the articular surfaces between groups, control,
106 reduced-muscle and muscleless atlases for each rudiment were overlaid using ImageJ (atlas
107 videos included in supplementary material: videos S1-S7).

108 *Qualitative and quantitative analysis of data*

109 Regions of pronounced shape changes between groups were identified by applying repeatable,
110 recorded rotations to the atlas overlays, and measurements defined to quantitatively assess
111 these apparent differences as shown in Figures 1 and 2. Consistent measurements could be
112 made from equivalent sections and planes of each individual rudiment by applying the same
113 rotations used for the atlases. The planar orientations used are shown in Figure 3.
114 Measurements were performed in Gwyddion image editing software (Gwyddion 2.44,
115 <http://gwyddion.net/>, last accessed October 2018). As differences in rudiment length were
116 previously reported for some reduced-muscle and muscleless rudiments [15], measurements
117 were normalised by the length of the rudiment under investigation, in order to focus the
118 outcomes on shape-specific (rather than overall size dependent) changes. One-way analysis of
119 variance tests (ANOVAs) (SPSS Statistics 24, IBM corp., Armonk, NY), with significance
120 level of $\alpha=0.05$ were performed for all length-normalised measurements. Tukey’s post hoc test
121 was used to identify pairwise differences between the three groups. If the variances between
122 the groups were unequal, the Welch test was used and the pairwise differences were identified

123 by the Games-Howell post hoc test. If the assumption for normality was not satisfied, the
124 Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was used instead of ANOVAs. Only those results for which
125 a significant difference (p -value <0.05) between at least two of the three groups was found are
126 presented in detail and displayed graphically, while the full table of results is available in
127 supplementary Table S8. Power analyses were performed for all 13 measurements with
128 statistically significant differences and all had sufficient statistical power ($>64\%$, power
129 calculations in supplementary material S9). To allow for visual assessment of changes in shape
130 between groups, rudiment shape outlines were traced on frontal, lateral and axial sections
131 through the prime regions of interest for each rudiment.

132 **Results**

133 The control, reduced-muscle and muscleless atlas overlays for each rudiment are provided in
134 supplementary video files S1–S7, in which the control average shape is shown in blue, the
135 reduced-muscle in yellow and the muscleless in purple. Bearing in mind that the atlases are
136 based on the original (unscaled) data, the most obvious shape features are summarised below.
137 There was a lack of separation evident between the coracoid process and the scapular body in
138 the muscleless group (video S1), while a deformed shape was evident at the distal end of the
139 muscleless humerus (video S2). Changes in the ulnar trochlear notch were evident in both the
140 muscleless and reduced-muscle groups as compared to the controls (video S3). No apparent
141 differences between the three groups were observed in the acetabular atlases (video S5), while
142 the muscleless femoral head exhibited an abnormal protrusion in the region of the greater
143 trochanter (video S6). In the proximal tibia, the depth of the intercondylar region varied
144 between groups, with the reduced-muscle group appearing to have the shallowest intercondylar
145 region and the controls having the deepest intercondylar region (video S7). The reduced-muscle
146 tibiae appeared to have more prominent condyles than the control and muscleless tibiae (video

147 S7). A detailed qualitative and quantitative assessment of shape for five major joints, informed
148 by the atlas overlays, follows.

149 *Shoulder Joint*

150 The most substantial shape changes in the reduced-muscle and muscleless shoulder joints were
151 differences in the width and orientation of the glenoid cavities, which in the frontal plane
152 appeared smaller in the reduced-muscle and muscleless limbs compared to the controls (Figure
153 4i:B, P-A orientation), and mal-aligned in the muscleless limbs (Figure 4i:A, dashed lines).
154 However, the only significantly different measurement for the glenoid cavity was a reduction
155 in depth (measurement 1, Figure 1) in the muscleless group compared to the controls (Figure
156 4ii). Differences in humeral head shape were also evident. They appeared to be flatter and
157 wider in the reduced-muscle and muscleless groups (Figure 4i:C, D correspondingly), with the
158 muscleless humeral heads missing the greater tubercle (Figure 4i:C, arrow). Quantitative
159 differences in humeral head shape were found only for the reduced-muscle group, with humeral
160 head height (measurement 9, Figure 1) significantly greater in the reduced muscle group than
161 both other groups, and humeral head axial width (measurement 11, Figure 1) increased in the
162 reduced-muscle group compared to the muscleless group (Figure 4ii).

163 *Elbow Joint*

164 The key shape features evident from the 3D shapes and outlines of the distal humerus were
165 wider condyles in the reduced-muscle limbs (Figure 4i:D), and an altered intercondylar region
166 in the muscleless limbs (Figure 4i:D, asterisk). The muscleless specimens also exhibited an
167 abnormally sharp protuberance of the lateral condyle (Figure 4i:D, arrow). Three condylar
168 measurements and three measurements of the intercondylar region had significant differences
169 between groups. For the posterior intercondylar width and height (measurements 16 & 17,
170 Figure 1) the trends indicated progressive effects according to degree of muscle abnormality,
171 with decreasing width and increasing height from control to reduced-muscle and from reduced-

172 muscle to muscleless (Figure 4iii). Reduced-muscle and muscleless intercondylar widths were
173 both significantly decreased compared to controls, while only the muscleless intercondylar
174 height was significantly greater than controls (Figure 4iii). While anterior intercondylar depth
175 also exhibited an increasing trend with muscle abnormality, only the reduced-muscle group
176 was significantly increased compared to controls (Figure 4iii). In contrast, the condylar
177 measurements (medial condyle width, and lateral and medial condyle height; measurements
178 13–15, Figure 1) of the reduced-muscle samples tended to be increased compared to both
179 control and muscleless groups, with significant differences compared to one or both groups,
180 and no significant differences between control and muscleless groups (Figure 4iii). Therefore,
181 for the condyles of the distal humerus, the shape changes were divergent from what one might
182 expect based on the assumption of a linear dependency on muscle volume. The reduced-muscle
183 and muscleless proximal ulnae exhibited highly irregular shapes, with abnormal angulations
184 visible in the lateral plane (Figure 4i:F). These differences were more pronounced in the
185 muscleless group (Figure 4i:F, purple outlines). The shape and angle of the trochlear notch
186 (Figure 4i:E, TN) also appeared affected in the reduced-muscle and muscleless groups with the
187 convexity of the trochlear notch increasing from control to reduced-muscle to muscleless .
188 However, there were no statistically significant differences between groups for ulnar
189 measurements. No dramatic changes in shape of the proximal radius were evident (Figure 4i:G,
190 H) and quantitative analyses of the humeroradial articulation showed no significant differences
191 between control, reduced-muscle and muscleless groups. Therefore, in the elbow, the distal
192 humerus exhibited more severe changes than its opposing rudiments.

193 *Hip Joint*

194 Prominent qualitative differences in shape were observed in the muscleless acetabula and
195 femoral heads (Figure 5i, A–D). A progressive loss of the normal shape of the acetabulum from
196 control to reduced-muscle to muscleless pelvises was observed in the frontal plane (Figure
197 5i:A) with the shape of the muscleless acetabula resembling more a right angle than a

198 concavity. Quantitative analysis revealed a trend of reduced acetabular width (measurement 3,
199 Figure 2) from control to reduced-muscle to muscleless, with the only significant difference
200 being between the muscleless group and the controls (Figure 5ii). The femoral heads of the
201 reduced-muscle group appeared to be wider than those of the control or muscleless groups
202 (Figure 5i:C, D), while the femoral heads of the muscleless group were noticeably irregular in
203 the frontal plane, with a cylindrical profile in the lateral plane (Figure 5i:D, black arrowheads).
204 The muscleless proximal femora also had an abnormally shaped outgrowth below the emerging
205 greater trochanter (Figure 5i:C, asterisk). However, there were no significant differences
206 between any of the three groups for measurements of the proximal femur. Therefore, in the
207 muscleless group, the acetabulum was the most affected part of the hip joint with both
208 qualitative and quantitative changes relative to the controls, with some shape changes visible
209 qualitatively in the opposing femoral head.

210 *Knee joint*

211 There were few obvious shape abnormalities in the knee joints of the muscleless groups (Figure
212 5i:C–F), consistent with previous findings of a milder phenotype at the knee [15]. However,
213 the curvature of the femoral medial condyle appeared altered in the muscleless and reduced-
214 muscle groups compared to the control group (Figure 5i:D), and quantitative analyses revealed
215 significant increases in lateral condyle width (measurement 13, Figure 2) in the muscleless and
216 reduced-muscle groups compared to controls (Figure 5iii). The reduced-muscle group appeared
217 to have a wider tibial plateau than the other two groups (Figure 5i:E, double headed arrow),
218 while the muscleless group had an abnormally sharp protuberance of the medial condyle
219 (Figure 5i:E, arrowhead). The only significant differences found for the tibia were in the
220 reduced-muscle group, with a significantly wider condylar region (measurement 23, Figure 2)
221 and a significantly shallower intercondylar region (measurement 26, Figure 2) than both other
222 groups (Figure 5iii). The shape of the knee joint was therefore slightly more severely affected
223 in the reduced-muscle group than in the muscleless group.

224

225 **Discussion**

226 In this study, the effects of absent and reduced skeletal muscle on emerging murine limb joint
227 shape at one developmental stage were investigated. Image registration was used to precisely
228 align the major skeletal rudiments of forelimbs and hindlimbs. The shapes of the shoulder,
229 elbow, hip and knee joints were assessed qualitatively, using visual comparisons of aligned 3D
230 renderings and 2D outlines, and quantitatively, using selected measurements of the component
231 specimens. In line with previously published work [10, 15], we find that the elbow, hip and
232 shoulder joints are affected by a complete absence of muscle, and report for the first time the
233 effects on the shape of the knee joint. We also describe, for the first time, the effects on shape
234 of a reduction in muscle volume. The elbow joint is the most severely affected by either absent
235 or reduced muscle, with pronounced differences in shape and several significantly different
236 measurements. Meanwhile, the muscleless shoulder, hip and knee have only one significantly
237 different shape feature each compared to controls. A novel finding from this work is that, in
238 contrast to the ‘dose-effect’ found for the amount of muscle on the ossification process in some
239 rudiments (namely scapula and humerus) [15], the effects on joint shape are not linearly related
240 to the amount of muscle. Indeed, in some joints, the shape changes in reduced-muscle
241 rudiments are more pronounced than in the muscleless group. Finally, we find variation
242 between joint types in the severity of effect between opposing surfaces of the same joint due
243 to reduced or absent muscle. For example, in the elbow joint, the shape abnormalities of the
244 distal humerus are not matched by similar effects in the opposing radius and ulna.

245 There are some limitations to this study. While our data was aligned in 3D, and regions of
246 shape changes were identified using 3D data, qualitative and quantitative shape analysis was
247 performed on 2D data sections. While we considered 3D shape quantification methods, such
248 as principal component analysis (PCA) [28], our methods were preferable for visualising

249 specific measurable differences between three distinct groups. With PCA, shapes from all
250 groups must be grouped in one average shape. By keeping each individual original dataset
251 (precisely aligned with all other rudiments of the same type), we were able to perform statistical
252 analyses on specific, identifiable aspects of shape and anatomy. We were also able to highlight
253 qualitative shape changes between the three groups which were not easily quantified. For
254 example, we describe an increasingly irregular profile of the proximal ulna from control to
255 reduced-muscle to muscleless groups, which was not evident from the quantitative
256 measurements alone. The image registration and shape quantification techniques that we have
257 described here are time consuming and not yet fully automated, and therefore may not be
258 scalable to large datasets without further development of the methodological pipeline. Sample
259 sizes are admittedly low, due to the difficulty of obtaining large numbers of mutant animals
260 (double null embryos are produced at a rate of 1/16). However, power calculations
261 demonstrated that all 13 significant differences had sufficient statistical power (as detailed in
262 full in supplementary material, file S8) and therefore, we are confident that any results reported
263 as being significantly different are indeed representative.

264 This study confirms previous observations on the loss of reciprocal and interlocking joint
265 surfaces when muscle is absent, in the elbow, hip and shoulder [10, 15], but provides the first
266 detailed and quantitative description of shape changes. While our previous work, based on
267 observations of 3D reconstructions, stated that the knee joint “appeared unaffected” in the
268 muscleless limb mice [15], this substantially more detailed analysis has revealed several shape
269 changes in the knee joint due to the lack of muscle. This study provides the first description of
270 the effects of reduced skeletal muscle on joint shape, and reveals a complex relationship
271 between muscle volume and joint morphogenesis. The variation between joints for the effects
272 of reduced muscle volume could be due to inherent differences between the joints or their
273 dependence on muscle. It could also be that not all muscles are reduced by the same quantity
274 in these mice, as muscle fibre volume for these mice has been quantified only in two muscles

275 of the forelimb (the biceps and triceps branchii [29]). Meanwhile, function or interaction of
276 these abnormal muscles has not been quantified, which is another potentially confounding
277 factor. For example, it is likely that the movements of the reduced-muscle mice are atypical,
278 leading to abnormal (rather than simply reduced) mechanical stimulation of the joints.

279 Our assessment of the relationship between interlocking joint surfaces offers an insight into
280 how joint morphogenesis is directed, and the role of mechanical forces in this process. We find
281 that when skeletal muscle is absent or reduced, opposing articulating surfaces are usually both
282 abnormally shaped, but not always to the same degree. An influx model of joint development
283 was recently proposed, in which cells continuously enter the interzone and help shape the joint
284 [30]. Shwartz et al [30] observed asymmetry in the contribution of Gdf-5 positive cells to
285 opposing joint surfaces, and a previous paper from the same group [10] demonstrated abnormal
286 Gdf-5 expression in the interzone of a muscleless limb mouse model. Therefore, the asymmetry
287 in shape effects between opposing articulating surfaces that we observe could be a downstream
288 effect of abnormal modulation of mechanosensitive Gdf-5 progenitor cells. Another possible
289 contributor to the asymmetry in shape effects observed is growth-related pressures and strains,
290 as described by Henderson and Carter [31]. As distinct from direct muscle forces or the
291 biomechanical stimuli induced by movements, growth-related pressures and strains arise from
292 internal forces and local deformations generated by differential growth rates. When skeletal
293 muscle is present but with reduced volume, complex interactions between growth-related
294 strains and pressures, muscle forces and fetal movement patterns could be leading to the varied
295 outcomes seen between, and within, joints.

296 In conclusion, we precisely aligned the complex shapes of the developing mouse limb skeleton
297 using image registration techniques, and used the aligned data to perform consistent
298 measurements of the major synovial joints. We find that some joints are affected more than
299 others, and that a reduction in limb muscle volume can have effects as severe as, or more
300 pronounced than, the complete absence of muscle in some joints. These findings have relevance

301 for human developmental disorders of the skeleton, particularly for developmental dysplasia
302 of the hip and arthrogryposis, in which shape abnormalities are related in part to reduced,
303 restricted, or abnormal fetal movements. It is still unclear why the hip joint is particularly
304 dependant on fetal movements, or why there are particular joints which are more affected (in
305 frequency or severity) than others with arthrogryposis [9]. Our future work will apply the same
306 techniques to different stages of development, to understand how joint shape abnormalities
307 evolve over gestation.

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TablesTable 1: Numbers of limbs analysed in this study for the three groups.

| | Control | Reduced-muscle | Muscleless |
|----------|---------|----------------|------------|
| Forelimb | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Hindlimb | 5 | 5 | 7 |

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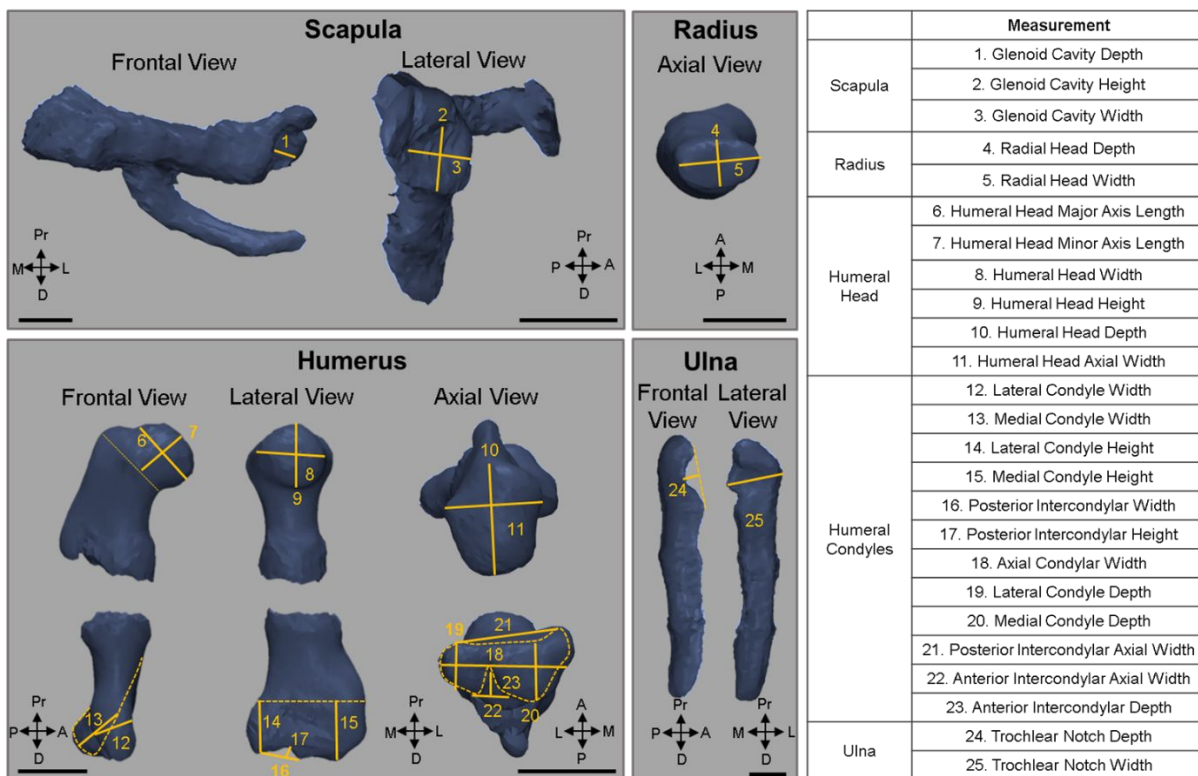
Figure 1: Measurements performed on individual rudiments of the forelimb. Left: locations of measurements (solid lines), with dashed lines indicating guides for measurements. Scale bars: 0.5mm. Pr: proximal, D: distal, A: anterior, P: posterior, M: medial, L: lateral. (Right) Reference numbers and nomenclature for all measurements performed.

Figure 2: Measurements performed on individual rudiments of the hindlimb. Left: locations of measurements (solid lines), with dashed lines indicating guides for measurements. Scale bars: 0.5mm. Pr: proximal, D: distal, A: anterior, P: posterior, M: medial, L: lateral. Right: reference numbers and nomenclature for all measurements performed.

Figure 3: Planar orientations used for measurements of individual rudiments (not to scale).

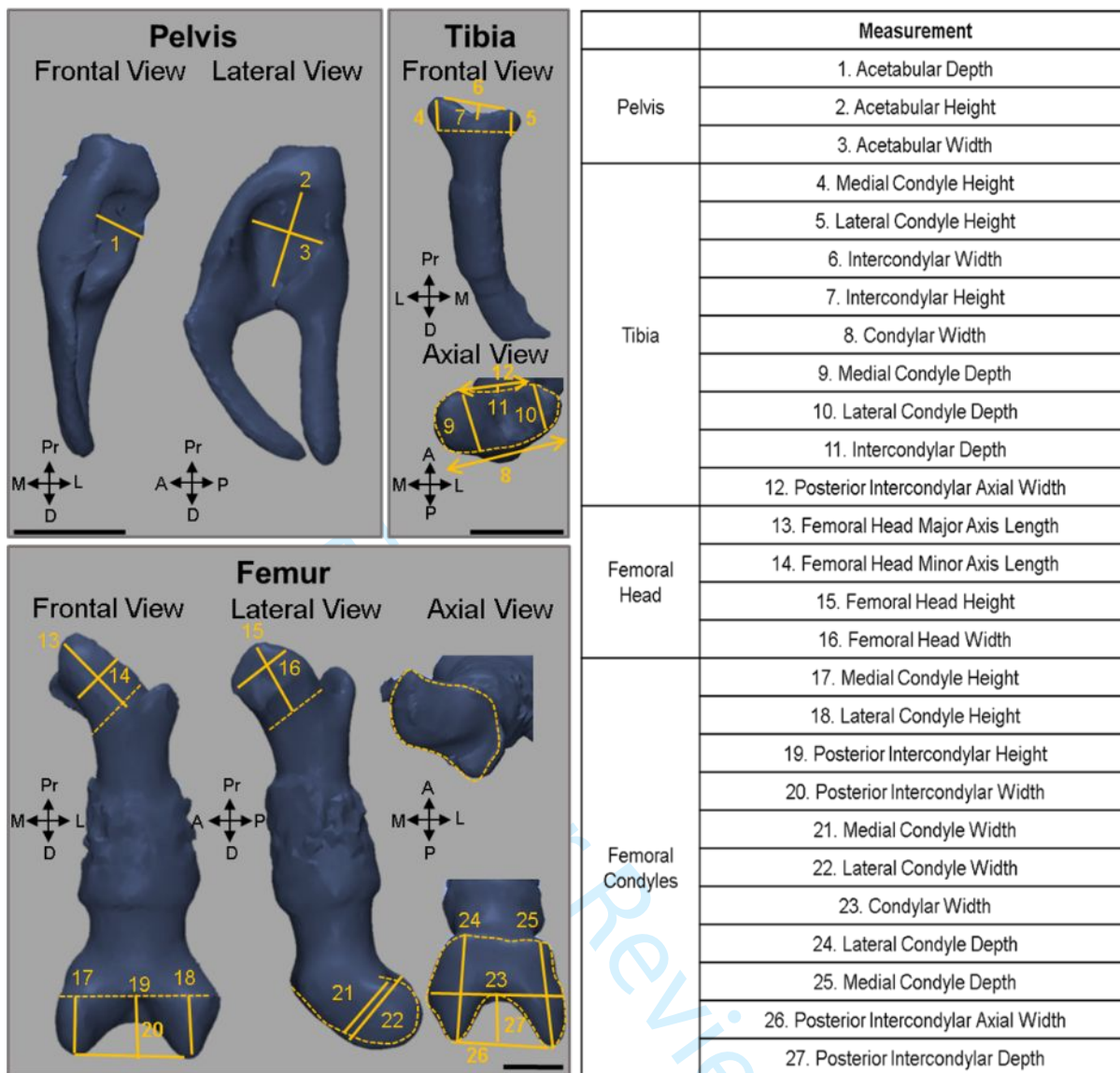
Figure 4: Abnormal muscle affects many aspects of elbow joint shape, with more limited effects on the shoulder joint. (i) Representative 3D shapes (left) and outlines of all five specimens (right) of control (blue), reduced-muscle (yellow) and muscleless (purple) forelimb rudiments. 3D shapes and outlines are of original sizes (i.e., not normalised). Key features of shape changes in the joints include: abnormal angle and increased height of the glenoid cavity in the muscleless group (A, B, purple outlines), abnormal prominence of the lateral condyle in the distal muscleless humerus (D, arrowhead) and greater variation in the shape of the proximal ulna in the reduced and muscleless groups (F, yellow and purple outlines). Pr: proximal, D: distal, A: anterior, P: posterior, M: medial, L: lateral, TN: Trochlear Notch. Scale bars: 1mm. (ii, iii) Length-normalised measurements (detailed in Figure 1) of the (ii) shoulder joint and (iii) humeroulnar joint for which significant (p value <0.05) differences between at least two groups were found.

Figure 5: The knee and hip joint are subtly affected by abnormal muscle. (i) Representative 3D shapes and outlines of control (blue), reduced-muscle (yellow) and muscleless (purple) hindlimb rudiments. 3D shapes and outlines are of original sizes (i.e., not normalised). Key features of shape changes in the joints include: progressive loss of concavity of the acetabulum (A outlines), and increase in acetabular width, from control to muscleless rudiments (B, outlines), irregularity of the muscleless proximal femur (C, D), and abnormalities of the proximal tibia, increased width in the reduced-muscle group (E, double-headed arrow) and protrusion of the medial condyle of the muscleless proximal tibia (E, arrowhead). (ii, iii) Length-normalised measurements (detailed in Figure 2) of the (ii) hip joint and (iii) knee joint for which significant (p value <0.05) differences between at least two groups were found.



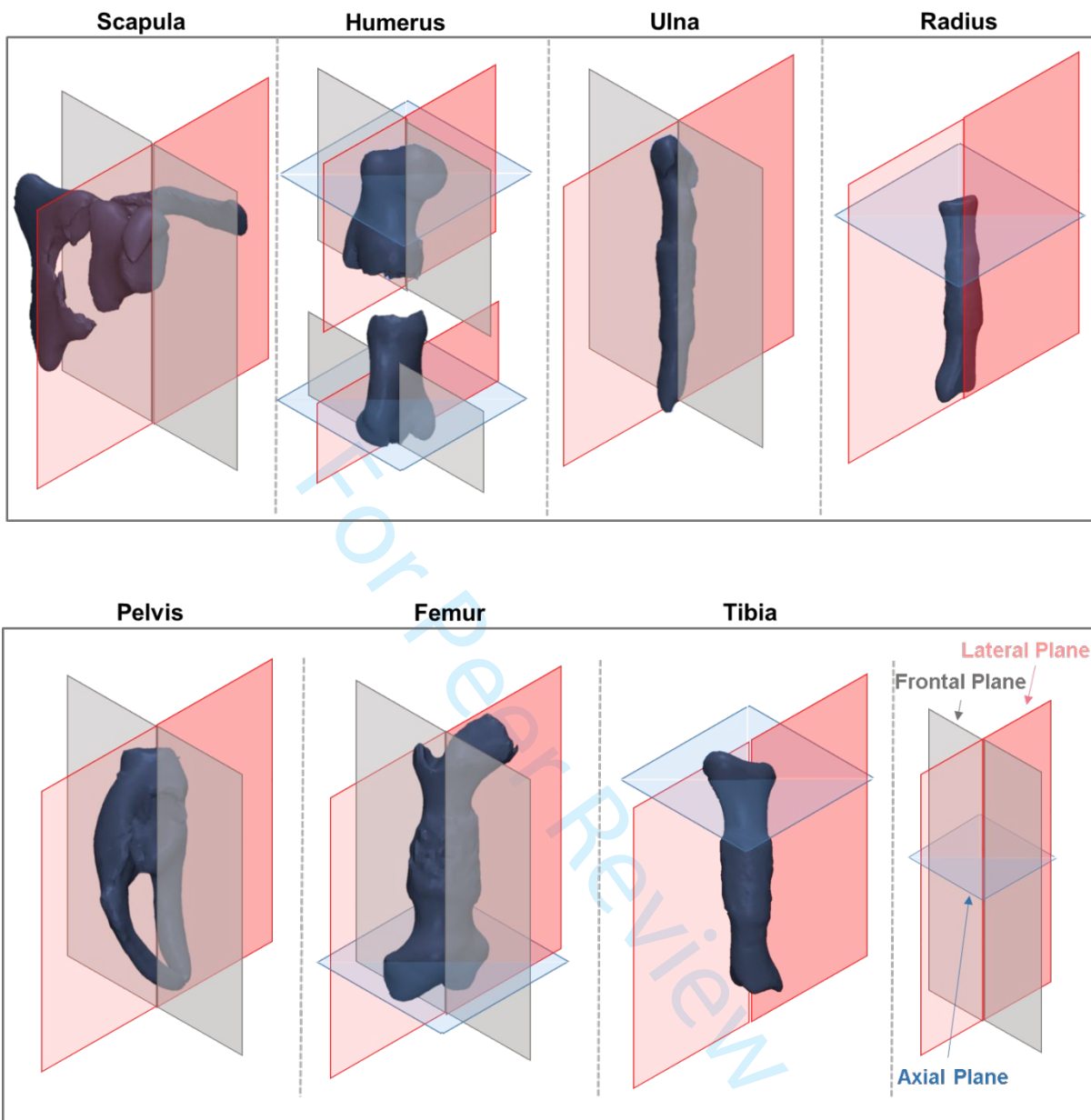
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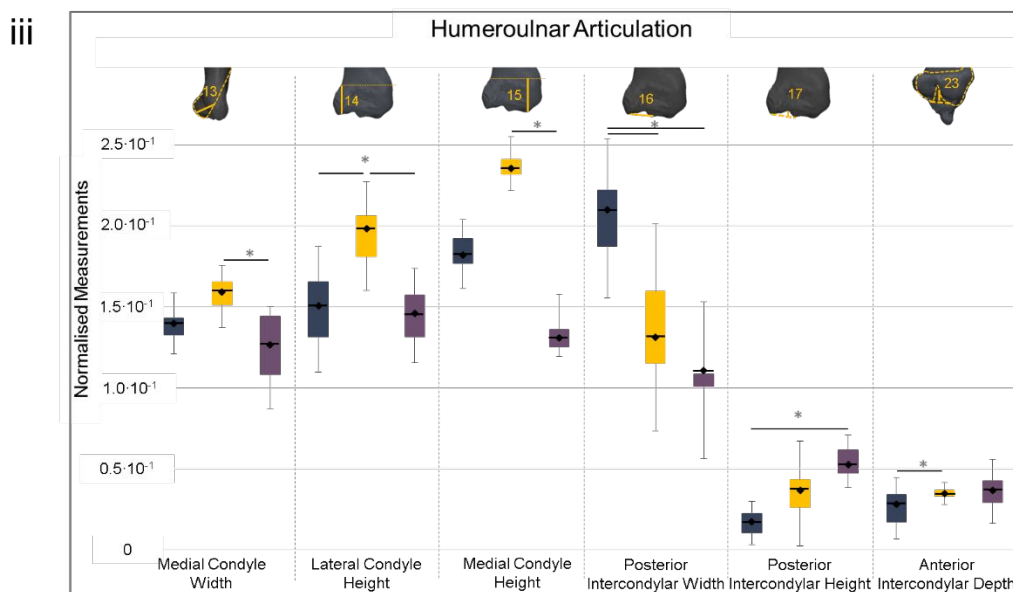
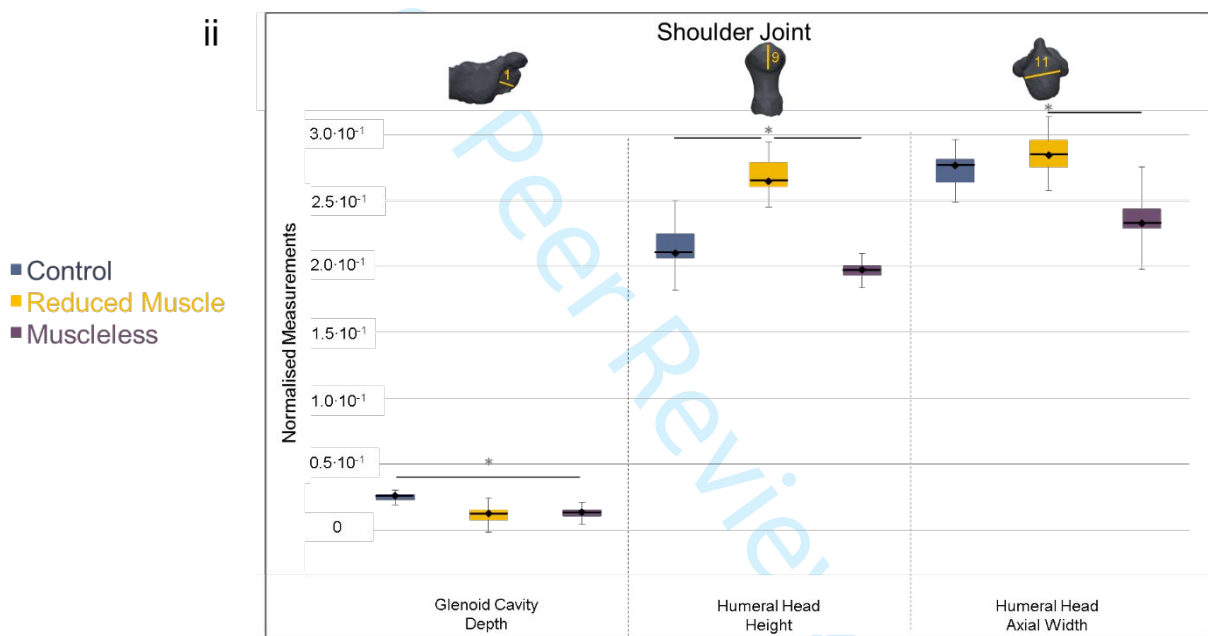
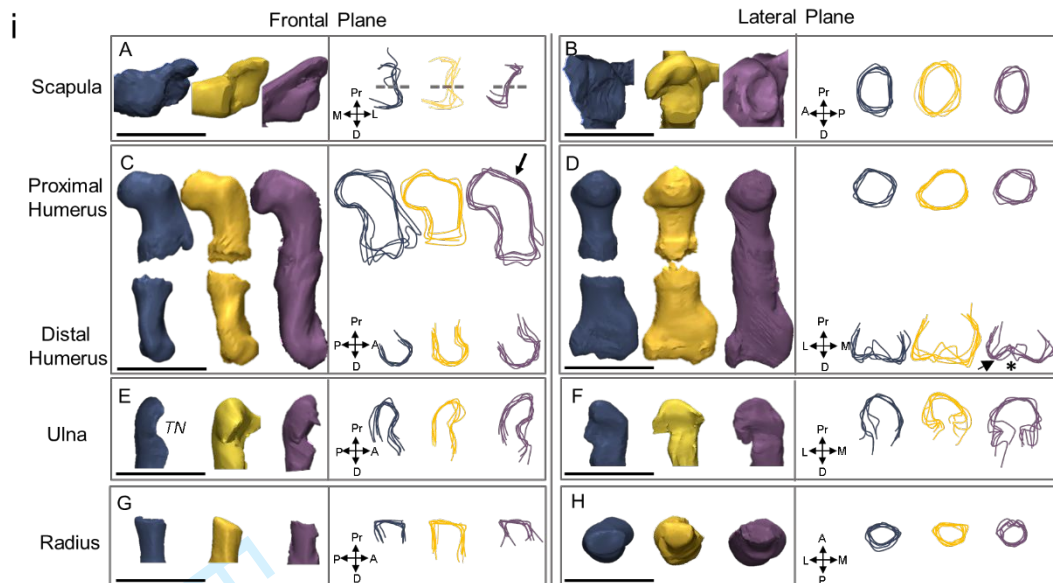


| | Measurement | |
|------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Pelvis | 1. Acetabular Depth | |
| | 2. Acetabular Height | |
| | 3. Acetabular Width | |
| Tibia | 4. Medial Condyle Height | |
| | 5. Lateral Condyle Height | |
| | 6. Intercondylar Width | |
| | 7. Intercondylar Height | |
| | 8. Condylar Width | |
| | 9. Medial Condyle Depth | |
| | 10. Lateral Condyle Depth | |
| | 11. Intercondylar Depth | |
| | 12. Posterior Intercondylar Axial Width | |
| | Femoral Head | 13. Femoral Head Major Axis Length |
| | | 14. Femoral Head Minor Axis Length |
| | | 15. Femoral Head Height |
| 16. Femoral Head Width | | |
| Femoral Condyles | 17. Medial Condyle Height | |
| | 18. Lateral Condyle Height | |
| | 19. Posterior Intercondylar Height | |
| | 20. Posterior Intercondylar Width | |
| | 21. Medial Condyle Width | |
| | 22. Lateral Condyle Width | |
| | 23. Condylar Width | |
| | 24. Lateral Condyle Depth | |
| | 25. Medial Condyle Depth | |
| | 26. Posterior Intercondylar Axial Width | |
| | 27. Posterior Intercondylar Depth | |

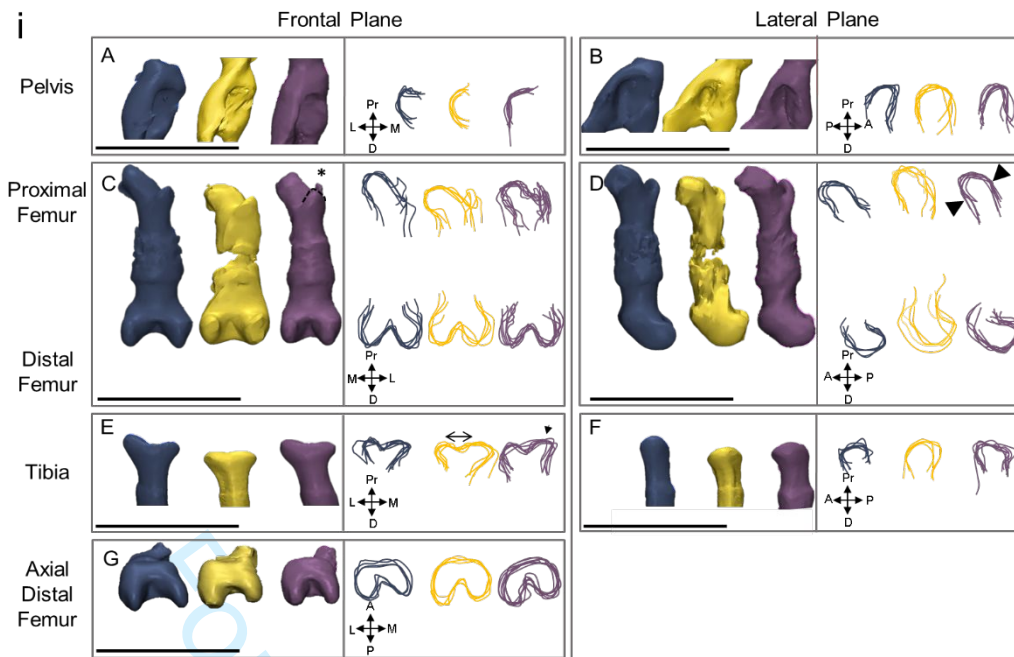
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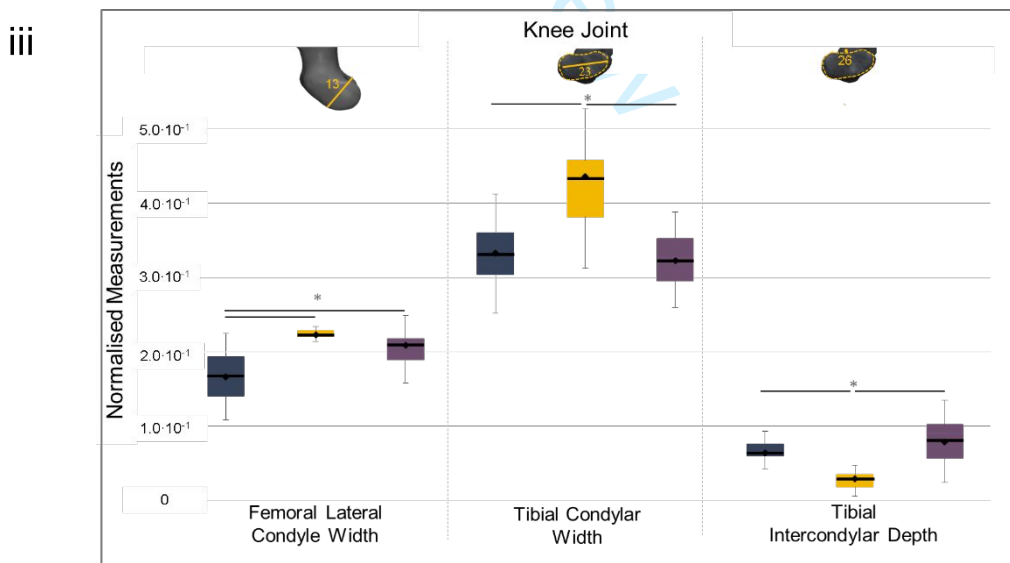
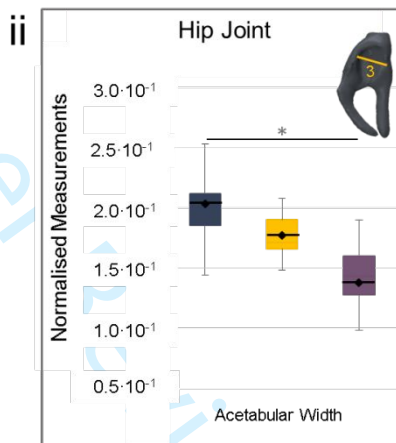
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- Control
- Reduced Muscle
- Muscleless



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