

SAMUEL A. ACUÑA

Dept. of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
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EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Mechanical Engineering, May 2019

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, WI

Dissertation: Altered neuromuscular control of gait following traumatic brain injury and targeted neuromodulation to improve motor function

Master of Science, Mechanical Engineering, May 2015

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, WI

Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering, December 2012

Brigham Young University, Provo, UT

NCEES Fundamentals of Engineering exam passed October 2012

POSITIONS

Post-Doctoral Researcher

06/2019 – Present

Dept. of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX

PI: Yasin Dhafer, Ph.D.

Graduate Research Assistant

10/2013 – 05/2019

Neuromuscular Biomechanics Laboratory, Dept. of Mechanical Engineering

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, WI

PI: Darryl Thelen, Ph.D.

Research Assistant

08/2010 – 12/2012

Neuromechanics Research Group, Dept. of Mechanical Engineering

Brigham Young University, Provo, UT

PI: Steven Charles, Ph.D.

Systems Engineer

2010

Airborne Early Warning & Control: Project Wedgetail ISS

The Boeing Company, Kent, WA

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Publications:

1. **Acuña SA**, Ebrahimi A, Pomeroy RL, Martin JA, Thelen DG (In Press). Achilles tendon shear wave speed tracks the dynamic modulation of standing balance. *Physiological Reports*.
2. **Acuña SA**, Zunker JD, Thelen DG (2019). The effects of sub-threshold vibratory noise on visuomotor entrainment during human walking and standing in a virtual reality environment. *Human Movement Science*, 66: 587-599. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.humov.2019.06.009>
3. **Acuña SA**, Francis CA, Franz JR, Thelen DG (2019). The effects of cognitive load and optical flow on antagonist leg muscle coactivation during walking for young and older adults. *Electromyography and Kinesiology*, 44: 8-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jelekin.2018.11.003>
4. **Acuña SA**, Tyler ME, Danilov YP, Thelen DG (2018). Abnormal muscle activation patterns are associated with chronic gait deficits following traumatic brain injury. *Gait & Posture*, 62: 510-517. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gaitpost.2018.04.012> [Finalist for best paper award, GCMAS 2017].
5. **Acuña SA**, Smith DM, Robinson JM, Hawks JC, Starbuck P, King DL, Ridge ST, Charles SK (2014). Instrumented figure skating blade for measuring on-ice skating forces. *Measurement Science and Technology*, 25(12): 125901. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1088/0957-0233/25/12/125901>

HONORS & AWARDS

- 2019 Finalist, Graduate Student Rapid Poster Award Competition, Conference for the International Society of Biomechanics
- 2019 Travel Award, Education Council of the Gait and Clinical Movement Analysis Society
- 2018 Finalist, Doctoral Student Presentation Competition, Conference for the American Society of Biomechanics
- 2018 Runner Up, ASME-BED PhD Level Student Paper Competition, 8th World Congress of Biomechanics
- 2018 Student Travel Grant, De Luca Foundation, 8th World Congress of Biomechanics
- 2018 1st place, Engineering Expo Graduate Exhibits, University of Wisconsin–Madison
- 2017 Kevin Granata Young Investigator Award, Gait and Clinical Movement Analysis Society
- 2017 Finalist, Best Paper Award, Gait and Clinical Movement Analysis Society
- 2017 Student Travel Grant, De Luca Foundation, Conference for the American Society of Biomechanics
- 2017 Greatest Impact Award, National Biomechanics Day Student Competition
- 2017 1st place, Engineering Expo Graduate Exhibits, University of Wisconsin–Madison
- 2017 Travel Award, Education Council of the Gait and Clinical Movement Analysis Society
- 2016 Mechanical Engineering–Graduate School Physical Sciences Division Fellowship, University of Wisconsin–Madison
- 2016 1st place, Engineering Expo Graduate Exhibits, University of Wisconsin–Madison
- 2015 Diversity Travel Award, American Society of Biomechanics
- 2015-17 Training, Education, And Mentoring in Science (TEAM-Science) Program Scholar, University of Wisconsin–Madison
- 2014-18 Advanced Opportunity Fellowship, Graduate Engineering Research Scholars (GERS), University of Wisconsin–Madison

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Member, American Society of Biomechanics
- Member, International Society of Electrophysiology and Kinesiology
- Member, Gait and Clinical Movement Analysis Society
- Affiliate Member, UW–Madison Teaching Academy
- Affiliate Member, National Postdoctoral Association

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Dept. of Mechanical Engineering

Fall 2018, Graduate Teaching Assistant and Lecturer, ME 549 (Product Design)

Fall 2017, Graduate Teaching Assistant and Lecturer, ME 549 (Product Design)

Fall 2016, Graduate Teaching Assistant and Lecturer, ME 549 (Product Design)

Fall 2015, Graduate Teaching Assistant, ME 549 (Product Design)

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Dept. of Biomedical Engineering

Spring 2017, Mentor for Student Design Team, BME 201/301 (Biomedical Engineering Design)

Fall 2016, Mentor for Student Design Team, BME 200/300 (Biomedical Engineering Design)

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Pre-College Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence

Summer 2017, Instructor, Engineering Workshop (Mechatronics for Product Design)

University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, Dept. of Kinesiology

Spring 2016, Guest Lecture, KINES 910 (Advanced Seminar in Health Sciences)

Brigham Young University, Dept. of Mechanical Engineering

Fall 2012, Teaching Assistant, ME 373 (Scientific Computing and Computer Aided Engineering)

MENTORING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Students

Tony Kim, University of Texas – Dallas (Biomedical Engineering) Fall 2019 – Present

Undergraduate Students

Bailey Ramesh, UW–Madison (Biomedical Engineering) Fall 2017 – Spring 2018
Isaac Loegering, UW–Madison (Biomedical Engineering) Summer 2016
John Zunker, UW–Madison (Mechanical Engineering) Fall 2015 – Fall 2018

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

American Society of Biomechanics:

Student Advisory Committee, 09/2016 – 08/2019

Manuscript Reviewer:

Gait & Posture

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

1. Becoming successful product design engineers. Future Faculty Career Exploration Program. Rochester Institute of Technology. Rochester, NY. September 2018.
2. Non-invasive neuromodulation to improve upright balance when walking. Neuromechanics seminar. Brigham Young University. Provo, UT. May 2017.
3. Maintenance of balance with aging: choose your steps carefully. 28th Annual Colloquium on Aging. UW–Madison Institute on Aging. Madison, WI. September 2016. [*Voted most popular speaker by colloquium attendees.*]
4. Maintaining balance while aging: choose your steps carefully. The Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery: Noon @ the Niche lecture series. University of Wisconsin–Madison. Madison, WI. March 2016.
5. Maintenance of balance with aging: choose your steps carefully. UW–Madison Institute on Aging Materials Science Program. Madison, WI. October 2015.

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

1. **Acuña SA**, Dhafer YY. Individuals with chronic traumatic brain injury exhibit decreased neuromuscular complexity when walking: an overview of neuromechanics research. Podium presentation at the UT Southwestern Postdoctoral Association Annual Research Symposium. Dallas, TX. September 2019.
2. **Acuña SA**, Ebrahimi A, Thelen DG. Achilles tendon shear wave speed as a measure of the active modulation of standing balance. Podium and poster presentation at the joint conference of the International Society of Biomechanics and American Society of Biomechanics. Calgary, AB. August 2019. [*Finalist for ASB Doctoral Student Presentation Competition.*]
3. **Acuña SA**, Zunker JD, Thelen DG. Sub-threshold vibratory noise does not alter visuomotor entrainment during human walking. Poster presentation at the Gait and Clinical Motion Analysis Society Annual Meeting. Frisco, TX. March 2019.
4. **Acuña SA**, Tyler ME, Danilov YP, Thelen DG. Changes in dynamic motor control following neurorehabilitation for traumatic brain injury: treadmill vs overground walking. Podium and poster presentation at the American Society of Biomechanics Annual Meeting. Rochester, MN. August 2018. [*Finalist for ASB Doctoral Student Presentation Competition.*]
5. **Acuña SA**, Tyler ME, Danilov YP, Thelen DG. Improvements in dynamic motor control following neurorehabilitation of chronic balance deficits due to prior traumatic brain injury. Podium presentation at the 8th World Congress of Biomechanics. Dublin, Ireland. July 2018. [*Runner up for the ASME-BED PhD Level Student Paper Competition.*]
6. **Acuña SA**, Francis CA, Franz JR, Thelen DG. Walking with visual perturbations but not an attention-dividing task modulates muscle coactivation patterns in old adults. Podium presentation

- at the XXII Congress of the International Society of Electrophysiology and Kinesiology. Dublin, Ireland. June 2018.
7. **Acuña SA**, Michaelis JE, Roth JD, Towles JD. Intervention designed to increase interest in engineering for low-interest, K-12 girls did so for boys and girls. Presentation at the American Society for Engineering Educations Annual Conference and Exposition. Salt Lake City, UT. June 2018.
 8. **Acuña SA**, Tyler ME, Danilov YP, Thelen DG. Effect of non-invasive neuromodulation on rehabilitation of gait in chronic traumatic brain injury. Podium presentation at the Gait and Clinical Motion Analysis Society Annual Meeting. Indianapolis, IN. May 2018.
 9. **Acuña SA**, Tyler M, Danilov Y, Thelen DG. Individuals with a prior traumatic brain injury exhibit decreased neuromuscular complexity during gait. Thematic poster presentation at the American Society of Biomechanics Annual Meeting. Boulder, CO. August 2017.
 10. Zunker JD, **Acuña SA**, Thelen DG. Piezoelectric device for peripheral stochastic sub sensory vibration. Poster presentation at the American Society of Biomechanics Annual Meeting. Boulder, CO. August 2017.
 11. Francis CA, Michaelis JE, **Acuña SA**, Towles JD. Impact of Biomechanics-based activities on situational and individual interest among K-12 students. Podium presentation at the 2017 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference and Exposition. Columbus, OH. June 2017.
 12. **Acuña SA**, Tyler M, Danilov Y, Thelen DG. Muscle activation patterns during walking are correlated to clinical gait assessments after traumatic brain injury. Podium presentation at the Gait and Clinical Movement Analysis Society Annual Meeting. Salt Lake City, UT. May 2017. [*Nominated for best paper.*]
 13. **Acuña SA**, Thelen DG. Cranial nerve non-invasive neuromodulation for symptomatic treatment of traumatic brain injury. Poster presentation at the Opportunities in Engineering Annual Conference. Madison, WI. November 2016.
 14. Francis CA, Franz JR, **Acuña SA**, Thelen DG. Gait and balance training improves gait variability in older adults. Thematic poster presentation at the American Society of Biomechanics Annual Meeting. Raleigh, NC. August 2016.
 15. **Acuña SA**, Tyler M, Danilov Y, Thelen DG. Cranial nerve non-invasive neuromodulation for symptomatic treatment of mild and moderate traumatic brain injury: effects on muscle coordination patterns during walking. Podium presentation at the XXI Congress of the International Society of Electrophysiology and Kinesiology. Chicago, IL. July 2016.
 16. **Acuña SA**, Tyler M, Danilov Y, Thelen DG. Cranial nerve non-invasive neuromodulation for symptomatic treatment of mild and moderate traumatic brain injury: effects on muscle coordination patterns during walking. Poster presentation at the Dynamic Walking Conference: Principles of Dynamic Locomotion. Holly, MI. June 2016.
 17. **Acuña SA**, Thelen DG. Efforts for preventing falls in the elderly via stochastic resonance. Poster presentation at the Opportunities in Engineering Annual Conference. Madison, WI. October 2015.
 18. **Acuña SA**, Towles JD, Thelen DG. Modeling based analysis of the trapezial-metacarpal joint to reduce osteoarthritis. Poster presentation at the Opportunities in Engineering Annual Conference. Madison, WI. November 2014.
 19. Smith DM, **Acuña SA**, Hawks JC, Packard JG, Robinson JM, King DL, Ridge ST, Charles SK. System for measuring figure skate forces on ice. Poster presentation at the 7th World Congress of Biomechanics. Boston, MA. July 2014.