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Walking Method in Communication Science Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the walking method as a learning method in communication science pedagogy, especially within Tourism Communication course at Halu Oleo University. This study lay pedagogy-reflective as important part of PJBL model and proposes vast understanding of what is the authentic matter in tourism communication. Utilizing qualitative method, this study involved 34 students as participants who were directed to do 'the walking' and create Zine as their reflections during the program. The finding of the study locates the walking method as pedagogy within tourism communication that integrates theory, experience, and reflection. This method encourages student's sensitivity to the spaces and engages of tourism communication in everyday life. The walking method challenged conventional assumptions about teaching at the university level which transformed how lecturer engaged with student within the learning process. Furthermore, this method assists the PJBL model to be easily understood and substantiates this course to students' daily lives.

INTRODUCTION

This is the study exploring the "Walking Method" as a learning method in the Tourism Communication course (*Mata Kuliah Komunikasi Pariwisata*). The Tourism Communication course is one of the subjects in the Communication Science Department at Halu Oleo University (UHO). This subject uses the Project Based Learning (PJBL) model in semester learning plan (RPS) in UHO's curriculum, and this research suggests walking as learning approach or method that strengthens the PJBL model, especially in its emphasis on student experiences and critical awareness in understanding tourism communication.

PJBL is known to emphasizes "student outcomes" which consist of six characteristics such as encouraging students to ask questions, focus on learning objectives, participation in educational activities, collaboration between students, use of supporting technology, and the creation of tangible artifacts (Guo et al., 2020; Krajcik & Shin, 2014). However, Guo et al. (2020) explained that the most important aspect of PJBL, and what differentiates it from problem-based learning, is the element of creating of tangible artifacts that must solve authentic problems.

In Tourism Communication courses in general, the solved authentic problem is often taught in economic oriented framework. Its pedagogy direct student how to promote a destination tourism or tourist attraction which constantly emphasized marketing methods (Moreno et al., 2024) with technological-oriented (Egger, 2013). Such method making the subject is regarded just a tool. As Dhona (2022) argues, tourism communication with

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economic oriented render tourism and communication separated. Whereas the authentic problems in tourism communication is various and complex things. Dhona offers cultural perspective and through the perspective, tourism communication course must teach in critical framework.

Following Dhona's thought, what we propose in this work is encouraging student to grasp tourism communication as "whole social relations that include modes of sociality and mobility" (Subijanto, 2024) in tourism. In their words, Pritchard & Jaworski (2005) state that communication in tourism "highlight the multiplicity tourism experiences and performances." To achieve the goals where student recognize critically the subject, through this study, we initiate and explore a pedagogy program or learning approaches in what we called "walking method".

We used "the walking method" as term according from Walking Methodologies idea by Springgay & Truman (2017) where they conceptualize "walking as a method and methodology in qualitative research is practiced and theorized through different and varied approaches". The roots of this approach stem from the ideas of several thinkers who have identified walking as a way of understanding the world, the environment we inhabit, as emphasized by thinkers like David Macauley (Macauley, 2000). In other words, "Springgay & Truman (2017) narrates, there are other themes to consider such as land and geology, affect theory, and movement" (Dasgupta, 2022).

Following Springgay & Truman (2017) the walking method canvas several elements in walking research, such as place, sensory inquiry, embodiment, and rhythm. Hereafter, the idea of the walking method is a concept that we adopt to generate this study. In addition, this study is perhaps closer to what is known as an embodied experience, which makes experience a crucial component of learning. Studies such as Jan Bengtsson's "Embodied Experience in Educational Practice and Research" are important here because he explores how Merleau-Ponty's experiential theory impacts educational practice and research (Bengtsson, 2013). However, other elements are significant because they provide students the wide range of ways to understand the course. Although in practice, all of these elements run simultaneously. In concept such as walking pedagogy or walking curriculum, emotional and imaginative engagement in place-based learning, is essential (Judson, 2024; Judson & Datura, 2023).

Various scholars have posited walking as part of their research in education issues. Study by Hotton (2015) examines several participants who work have explore walking in their work as educator and researchers. She interviews her participants by go-along interview and through the interviews, several themes emerged: walking as roots, walking as experiential, walking and metaphor, walking pragmatics and practicalities, walking in academia, and walking as a method of research. As similar study cited is that of Andersen & Balbontín (2021), specifically on how they attempted to implement walking, or what they call "walking with commentary," in analysing the "use and value of campus open spaces." Another study explained that walking serves a vehicle for students to assert their own position as active, aware, and engaged participant (Goertz, 2018). Latest research analyses through college student perspective and offer the importance of campus walking environments, spatial design and visual elements, in enhancing students' perceptual experiences (Qin et al., 2025). Another study conceptualize the walking pedagogy to be a trauma-informed, inclusive practice while also encouraging relationships with nature (Friedman et al., 2025).

As previous researches, this study was implemented at university, specifically at Halu Oleo University. However, one of the arguments by this study, and it distinguish from previous studies, is the using of certain theories in walking activity suggest the development of understanding of the walking as based-learning, particularly in higher education context. The walking method positions walking activity as an epistemological practice where knowledge is acquired through the engagement of the body, senses, and movement. In this study, the engagements are also built by creating artifacts as a final project. We use zines as a form of the artifact or work that students can produce. Zines were chosen because of their flexibility in form, which allows students to express themselves freely (Anderson & Spandler, 2025; Scheper, 2023)

In walking method program, we and students walk together in a route where we have directed. While walking we attempt to explore understanding the concepts that we have taught In the classroom in three weeks. The concepts or theories are *tourist gaze*, *staged authenticity*, and *production of space*, as well *walking method*. In short, we have absorbed these concepts from several thinkers. John Urry, through the concept of the *tourist gaze* (Urry, 2002), asserts that tourism is essentially a practice of seeing shaped by discourse, media, and specific social structures. The tourist gaze is not neutral, but rather directed, regulated, and produced through various visual and symbolic markers. Meanwhile, Dean MacCannell shows that the tourist experience is the result of a *staging process* (Maccannell, 2014), where space is staged through the distinction between frontstage and backstage, and mediated by various markers that make a place "worth visiting." Then, Henri Lefebvre, through the concept of *the production of space* (Lefebvre, 1992), reminds us that space is not a neutral or natural entity, but rather the result of social practices, representations, and lived experiences. Space is produced by the interaction between perceived space, conceived space, and lived space. This perspective opens up the possibility of reading everyday spaces, including university as loaded spaces with meaning and power relations.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a reflective pedagogy design (Colomer et al., 2020; Girija Navaneedhan, 2011) to explore the implementation of the walking method as a tourism communication learning model. A reflective pedagogy or reflective learning "strengthens critical thinking, cultivates self-awareness, and enhances the ability to apply knowledge in new contexts" (Rook et al., 2026). The walking method is positioned as an experiential-reflective learning approach that allows students to directly experience and interpret the material of course.

Data collection was carried out in several stages. First, participants completed a pre-test, which aimed to capture their initial conceptual understanding of the course material, their perceptions of the campus space, and their readiness to engage in the walking method. Second, participants took part in the walking method activity along the predetermined route. During this stage, the researcher conducted go-along observations and informal interviews, allowing insights to emerge through movement, dialogue, and shared spatial experience. Third, after the walking activity, participants completed a post-test that focused on changes in theoretical understanding, shifts in perspective, and reflections on the learning experience. Finally, participants were asked to produce a reflective learning output in the form of a Zine, which served as a creative and reflective medium for articulating their experiences, interpretations of space, and integration of theory with practice. Pre-tests and post-tests were used descriptively and reflectively to capture changes in students'

understanding tendencies, rather than as quantitative measurement tools. Data analysis was conducted through reflective thematic analysis, focusing on the learning process, depth of reflection, and the integration of theory with spatial experiences.



Figure 1 path map of the walking method program

This study involved fifth-semester students taking the Tourism Communication course from the Communication Studies Program, Department of Communication, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), Halu Oleo University (UHO). Thirty-four students participated in the study. The study was conducted on campus, specifically along a predetermined route: along the street behind FISIP, in front of the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB), and the park in front of the Halu Oleo University Library.

RESULT

The findings of this study were generated through the idea of the walking method from Springgay & Truman (2017). The concepts from Springgay & Truman (2017) such as place, sensory inquiry, embodiment, and rhythm, we implemented to the tourism communication learning and attempt to employed it as conceptual lenses for understanding students' experiences of walking. What we and the participants discussed throughout this research was never far from these concepts.

Place is understood as a specific location and as a process or an event (Springgay & Truman, 2017). In this study, the place are the university, a walking process or every event we encounter, as well as circumstances. Furthermore, the place or engaging with the place prompt alteration of participant's understanding of tourism communication theories. In other words, the place perhaps mediates participant's understanding of the theory and real world.

Sensory inquiry encouraged participants to attend to aspects of their surroundings that might otherwise remain unnoticed when learning takes place inside the classroom. During the walking activity, students were encouraged to pay attention not only to what they saw but also to what they heard, smelled, touched, felt, and experienced through changes in temperature, movement, sound, and spatial atmosphere. Then, these sensory encounters are approached by participants through various ways such as photo, video, or take a note.

Embodiment is about positioning the body not merely as a means of moving from one location to another but as an active medium through which knowledge was produced. "Embodiment …. where researchers and participants examine the lived experiences of what it means to move in a particular place" (Springgay & Truman, 2017). In this study,

embodiment is emerged by participants' spatial awareness, including sensory and rhythm. Eventually, participants did not experience the university environment as a static space, instead they encountered different rhythms produced by people, vehicles, academic activities, weather, sounds, and their own pace of movement.

By the four-conceptual lens, we resulted three findings that emphasis on the connection between the walking method and theoretical understanding, the walking method and the sensitivity inherent in experience and reflection, and ultimately, how walking can be a useful learning method in PJBL, particularly in producing work that not only addresses authentic problems but is also critical and personal.

Walking Method and Theoretical Understanding

In this section, we describe an alternation of participant's theoretical understanding about tourism communication, particularly their understanding about the tourist gaze, staged authenticity, and the production of space, as well as the walking method. The initial situation shows that participants already had a good understanding of the concepts or theories taught. However, most of participants stated they "agreed" to understand the concepts, but their understanding remained definitional and abstract. For instance, in a question emphasizing understanding John Urry's tourist gaze, dominant students' understanding was limited in general definitions. Observe how they understand 'gaze' in their daily lives on campus by referring to the following question: "What gaze do you usually use when walking on campus?" A participant answer:

> "When walking on campus, I usually use my everyday gaze, which is a natural way of looking at the environment without the intention of judging it like a tourist. I pay attention to things relevant to my activities as a student, such as the direction of buildings, friends, or the surrounding atmosphere." (FR, interview, December 12, 2025)

This statement deepened and became more detail and reflective as participants completed the activity or did the walking method. While initially using a normal gaze, which they called their everyday or natural gaze, after completing the activity, they expressed it differently, perhaps disparately.

> "I used to see this campus as just a place to study, but after I did the walking (method), I started to realize that the campus didn't match the reality. So, when I saw nice buildings or facilities, I started to wonder if they were actually functional or just for the show." (IN, interview, December 12, 2025)

A similar situation occurred in participants' understanding of MacCannell's staging concept. Before the activity, one participant stated:

> "In my opinion, the frontstage on campus is the areas that are intentionally displayed for the public, such as the front yard, faculty lobbies, the main garden, and photo spots frequently used by students. These spaces are usually tidier and cleaner, and represent the face of the campus because they are frequently visited by guests, seen by new students, or featured on social media. In other words, these spaces are designed to be seen and assessed by outsiders." (AA, interview, December 12, 2025)

After the activity, participants became clearer about their understanding of staging, specifically the diverse of frontstage and backstage concept. Here's what a participant said:

> "The UHO Library looks nice and tidy from the outside, but inside it's different. I've been to the UHO library and then inside I saw an elevator, but it wasn't working. And the UHO Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) looks nice and comfortable from the outside, but the classrooms don't have air conditioning, making it difficult for students to concentrate while studied. Some of the chairs are worn out, the restrooms are unusable, and the classrooms are disproportionate to the number of students, so students often fight for space to study." (NR, interview, December 12, 2025)

We discern that through the walking method, the staging concept was understood more deeply and critically. Comment such as "these spaces are usually neat and clean, and they represent the face of the campus because they are frequently visited by guests, seen by new students, or featured on social media" became more concrete "the UHO Library looks nice and tidy from the outside, but inside it's so disparate." While before the activity, participants tended to interpret the frontstage as a space "prepared to be seen," after the activity, this understanding shifted to an awareness of the *disjunction* between the image presented and the actual experience.

In this context, the walking method functions as a pedagogical tool that allows participants to directly experience the tension between frontstage and backstage, as MacCannell argues. The experience of walking, observing, and reflecting on space means that the concept of staging is no longer understood as an abstract category, but as a social practice operating in everyday campus life. Spaces previously considered neutral or "natural " are then read as spaces that are selectively produced, managed, and performed.

Thus, the walking method contributes to deepening theoretical understanding by bridging theory and empirical experience. Concepts taught in class are no longer simply learned through text, but are tested and reinterpreted through direct observational practices. This demonstrates that students' theoretical understanding evolves from a cognitive-descriptive level to a reflective-critical level, where theory is used as an analytical tool for the spatial realities they experience.

Walking Method and Embodied Experience

In this section, we focus on how participants' spatial awareness emerged during and after the walking method. Here, we focus on how participants reflected on what they learned from the concept of "production of space" and the walking method, more specifically on "embodied experience" (Pink, 2015; Springgay & Truman, 2017). Another important point to note is our direct interaction with participants during the activity. Their feelings and opinions provide strong data to strengthen this section.

Participants' feelings or reflections and observations during the walking activity, suggest that walking encouraged them to become more attentive to how spaces are produced, used, and experienced in everyday life. Through direct encounters with the university environment, participants began to notice that space was not simply a physical setting but was continuously shaped by social practices, interactions, movements, infrastructures, and everyday activities. Their reflections indicate a shift from understanding space as a fixed physical location toward recognizing it as something socially produced and experienced. In this sense, walking provided participants with an

opportunity to encounter Lefebvre's concept through situated and embodied experience rather than through theoretical explanation alone.

> "I became aware that campus spaces are not just places to pass through, but have meaning, function, and a purposefully crafted message." (AA, interview, December 12, 2025)

This statement demonstrates how this change occurred. The word "aware" is the key word for how participants began to become aware of the environment (space) that surrounds them and that they pass through every day. However, here, participants not only visually observe the space and then interpret its meaning, but also ultimately become aware of sensory dimensions such as sound, atmosphere, and emotional changes as they move from one space to another.

> "Usually, I just look at campus spaces without experiencing the surroundings. (However) when I walked to the Animal Husbandry section, it felt like I was in a village and I could feel the fresh morning air..." (LD, interview, December 12, 2025)

This awareness of the surrounding atmosphere is a sign of their sensitivity to the space they experienced through the walking method. The same applies to statements describing sensory issues. The statement about smell below exemplifies how the experience of walking opens awareness to lived space, namely, space experienced emotionally and symbolically.



Figure 2 Participants photograph a plant

"Before we got separated on the way to the UHO Botanical Gardens, we were distracted by the unorganized garbage disposal. Then, we came across a sign that said, 'Do Not Litter' but clearly, next to the management parking lot, there were trash bins scattered and not disposed of properly; they were dumped outside. Our distraction was due to the overpowering smell."

In walkability perspective, what the participant state that the lack of walking routes or facility of campus where user became uncomfortable (King et al., 2020; Liao & Zhu, 2025). However, participant's sensitivity to scent became interesting when one group of five people smelled the aroma of fried fish in the middle of the park while they were walking. They thought it seemed strange because they didn't see anything related to or causing the scent, such as a food stall. However, what we concluded was that the incident made their

walking experience more personal and, most importantly, as they said, "made them ask questions."

Each group demonstrated their own sensitivity. We recorded several events or objects they saw, felt, and passed. These included "passing through an area they had never seen before during college," "finding a mimosa flower" associated with their childhood, photographing a "fallen tree," a "bamboo tree," "drainage," a "damaged road," and so on.

In general, each participant's response ranged from surprise, awe, to comfort upon encountering these things they considered "previously familiar spaces." However, in this section, other feelings that didn't fall into the categories most participants expressed are worth considering. Feelings like "just so-so" emerged when some participants were asked to describe their feelings. This may have been related to the fatigue and boredom they experienced throughout the activity.

> Essentially, this finding aligns with Lefebvre's view that space is not simply understood as a physical entity, but as a result of lived experience. The walking method allowed participants to experience space, even what they learned in class about spatial theory, in an embodied way, or in their own words: "The biggest change was that the things I had seen so far were ordinary, but after participating in the walking method, I discovered many truly amazing things that could be seen in the theory." (CK, interview, December 12, 2025)

The Walking Method and Zine: The Freedom Authentic Product

In this section, we analyse this section from the work produced by each group and how they presented it. Participants were asked to create a zine in a size and shape of their choosing. While further research is needed regarding the relevance of zines in the context of university-level pedagogy, we believe that incorporating zines into this activity as the final product broadens student reflection, as emphasized in the study (Brown et al., 2021).

Several design elements, such as logos, photos, fonts, and even colour choices, are part of this reflection, transforming students not as "consumers of knowledge" but as creators, critics, and experts within their communities (Desyllas & Sinclair, 2014). In other words, zines don't simply "recall or recite educational experiences" but also "encourage their creators to reflect deeply on the implications of their learning experiences and to situate them within their own contexts." In this case, the experiences during the activity were perfectly presented through zines.

Several works were produced by each group. There were at least two types of zines: a book-format zine and a map-format zine on larger paper (manila paper/A1). For the book-format zine, one group created a three-dimensional, or pop-up, displaying the diversity of their creativity in creating their work. Another, perhaps more common, theme was the association between gardens and their reflections on them, which were almost uniform. Gardens are romantic places, with photos of trees, flowers, and expanses of grass dominating their works. However, one interesting observation, potentially leading to further research, was our observation of gender within each group. We observed that when a group was predominantly female, their representation of gardens was not far from "romantic," while when a group was predominantly male, gardens were associated with childhood.

One group created maps titled "Walking Method Maps." Unlike typical maps, this work attempts to represent both the location and the participants' experiences. Interestingly,

they imbue the map with an adventurous theme or feel. Elements such as treasure chests, monkeys, "adventurer" costumes, and the colour brown reflect this nuance.



Figure 3 one of zine created by student

This adventurous concept is also found in the book-format zine, but in a different language. For example, the image below displays the words "live free" accompanied by photos of flowers and other green ornaments.



Figure 4 one of zine in book format created by student



Figure 5 one of zine in book format created by student

Another prominent feature, especially in the book-format zine, are photos of group members together, or what they call the "Memories" page. This finding reflects how participants position their course assignments or work as something personal and close to what happens to them in their daily lives. Ultimately, these participants' works demonstrate authentic issues and how they address them through critical and personal projects that position Tourism Communication learning beyond simply understanding tourism as an industrial issue to address everyday issues. Furthermore, we observed that the greatest strength of this learning method was the shift in how participants presented or explained group assignments to the class. They seemed to be no longer fixated on their phones, as in our previous experience, students often used them for presentations. In this activity, students shared their experiences while walking, then explained why they embodied them in their work. At certain moments, they articulated those experiences with the theories they had learned. For example, one group presented photos they took in the park and interpreted them through what they called a "nostalgic gaze."

Ultimately, the findings of this study demonstrate that the walking method not only serves as a variation of learning methods, but perhaps also as a pedagogical model capable of integrating theory, experience, and critical reflection. Through the practice of walking together, students actively engage in the learning process and no longer position theory as knowledge separate from reality. The walking method enables students to read campus spaces as, not just tourism spaces, but as diverse spaces, where the practices of gazing, staging, and spatial production can be directly observed. As the following participant stated:

> "(After participating in this activity) there was a change in perspective. Initially, I saw the UHO campus solely as a place to study, but after walking further, I realized that each space has a different function and atmosphere. I also became more sensitive to how campus spaces influence student activities and interactions." (H, interview, December 12, 2025)

Thus, this learning method allows for a broader and more contextual definition of tourism communication. In other words, it reinforces the understanding that tourism is a communication practice present in everyday life, not solely an activity occurring at destinations or in the formal tourism industry.

DISCUSSION

The Walking Method as a Tourism Communication Learning Method

In this section, we argue that the walking method has significant potential in tourism communication learning. Through the conceptual lens from Springgay & Truman (2017) such as place, sensory inquiry, embodiment, and rhythm, our study provides the walking method enables integration between theory and lived experience. In this sense, the walking method situate tourism communication into students' immediate environment and student's daily live as actual issues. Due to the walking method, participants or students became more sensitive to the contradictions between representation and lived reality, an awareness that is essential for critically understanding tourism communication practices. Their sensitivity to attend not only to visual representations of space, but also to atmosphere, sound, smell, and affect. These sensory encounters deepened students' awareness of how spaces communicate meaning beyond official narratives or visual

aesthetics. Such awareness is particularly relevant in tourism communication, where experiences are often mediated, curated, and staged.

Utilizing zine as a final product reinforces the reflective and participatory dimension of the walking method. The zines functioned as what can be described as "the freedom authentic artifacts," combining personal experience, critical interpretation, and creative expression. Students articulated their insights through book' zine, maps, and pop up' zine. This aligns with PJBL principles, where learning outcomes are demonstrated through meaningful products that reflect both cognitive and affective engagement. Moreover, the presentation of zines revealed a notable shift in students' communicative confidence and engagement. Students were no longer dependent on scripted presentations, instead, they narrated their experiences, linked them to theory, and justified their interpretive choices.

Furthermore, this research marked a critical moment of pedagogical awareness, especially for lecturer approaches. The walking method challenged conventional method, particularly the idea that effective learning primarily occurs through structured lectures and classroom-based discussions. Instead, this activity highlighted the importance of openness, relational engagement, and co-presence in learning. Teaching, in this context, became a reciprocal process in which the instructor also learned about students' perspectives, sensitivities, and ways of making sense of space. Several students who were typically seated at the back of the classroom and rarely participated in discussions began to express their opinions during the walking activity. In the absence of formal classroom arrangements, these students appeared more confident in articulating their observations and reflections. This shift suggests that spatial and pedagogical configurations significantly influence participation and voice in university-level learning. The walking method, therefore, not only transformed how students engaged with theory, but also how they positioned themselves within the learning process.

Taken together, these findings suggest a conceptualization of walking pedagogy as a sensory, embodied, theoretical, and representational practice. Its pedagogical value emerges from the movement between the body, place, theory, and media artifact. In this sense, the contribution of this study is the walking can transform tourism communication theories into situated practices of spatial reading and communication. The combination of walking and zine-making demonstrates how students can move from experiencing a place, to theorizing that experience, and finally to representing the place for others. This offers a specific contribution to the development of walking pedagogy within Communication Science and Tourism Communication.

CONCLUSION

As a learning method, the walking method in the Tourism Communication course is crucial. There are several important findings in this study, but as a conclusion we summarize them in two main dimensions, namely theoretical and pedagogical. These dimensions ultimately contribute ideas to both tourism communication courses and, also, the walking method as pedagogical method.

Theoretically, this study extends the use of the concepts of the tourist gaze and staged authenticity to the context of everyday space and demonstrates the relevance of the production of space as an integrative framework for interpreting tourism communication practices. These findings emphasize that tourism does not only occur in formal destinations but also exists as a communication practice that can be observed, studied, and reflected upon in everyday spaces. Thus, this study not only contributes to the development of

tourism communication learning methods but also enriches the theoretical discourse on how tourism practices and spatial communication can be understood through everyday experiences and a pedagogical approach based on the walking method. More broadly, this approach challenges the tendency to frame tourism solely as an industrial or destination-based phenomenon.

Pedagogically, this study proposes the walking method as a tourism communication learning method that integrates theory, experience, and reflection. This method encourages students to be active participants in the learning process and strengthens their sensitivity to the spaces and practices of tourism communication in everyday life. This is emphasized in the PJBL model used as the learning model for this course. The walking method challenged conventional assumptions about teaching at the university level which transformed how lecturer engaged with student within the learning process.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

This study adhered to ethical research principles, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity. Participants were informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. All information was treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional ethics committee, where applicable.

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