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SOLLERMAN HAND FUNCTION TEST

A Standardised Method and its Use in Tetraplegic Patients

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(Submitted for publication 9 June, 1994)

Abstract. A standardised hand function test based on seven of the eight most common hand grips is reported. The test consists of 20 activities of daily living. The test procedure and the method of scoring are described as is our evaluation of the validity and reliability of the test. Fifty-nine tetraplegic patients were evaluated using the test before reconstructive surgery to their hands. The test score correlated well with the accepted international functional classification of the patient's arm \( r = 0.76, p < 0.001 \). The mean test score in the arms of patients lacking sensation was significantly lower than in those with tactile gnosis \( (O:1–3 \text{ compared with OCu:} 1–3, p < 0.001) \).

Key words: hand function evaluation, hand function test, tetraplegia.

Evaluation of hand function is of great importance in hand surgery, because the choice of treatment and the assessment of the results of treatment are dependent on the function of the hand. To assess and compare the results of reconstructive hand surgery, a standardised test that gives an index of overall hand function is needed. Such a test should be easily given during a short period of time and the results should be reproducible and correlate with other ways of assessing hand function. The test should include objective measurements of standardised tasks commonly used in activities of daily living (8). Several methods have been used for this purpose, but most of them were designed for special diagnoses and questions (2, 5, 8, 12, 13, 16, 19, 21, 27, 29).

Already in 1980 one of us (CS) designed and presented a new hand function test based on the seven most frequently used hand-grips (22). We have used this method for testing hand function since then, and present our experience, which is mainly in tetraplegic patients.

PATIENTS AND METHODS

The hand function test

In previous studies hand-grips were classified (7) and the use of eight most common hand-grips in activities of daily living was analysed (Fig. 1 and Table I) (23). A grip function test was designed based on these studies in which seven of the eight hand-grips were used. The test consists of 20 subtests, each comprising a task considered to be an activity of daily living, the performance of which could be easily scored. Each subtest is scored by the examiner on a scale from 4 to 0 points according to the guidelines for scoring shown in Table II.

The scoring rules were chosen so that subjects with normal hand function would achieve 80 points with the dominant hand and 77–79 points with the non-dominant hand. The test equipment was mounted in a box (Fig. 2), so that the test could be applied quickly and easily. The Yale-lock and the doorknob were placed on both sides of the wall in the box in order to fit both the right and the left hand. Table III shows the 20 subtests and a detailed description is given in the Appendix.

When testing hand function, the subject is seated in front of the box, which is placed on a table. In addition to information about the design and purpose of the test, the instructions to the subject state that the tasks should be done with no hurry in the way to which they are accustomed, that the subject should be seated throughout the test, but is permitted to stand if he has to (yields a lower test score), and that a free choice of grip is allowed. The manual contains a list of "normal and permitted" hand-grips for each test, however, and any divergence from these yields a lower score. The test is done with one hand at the time with the exception of subtests 11, 14, and 15 which require both hands. As the upper time limit for each subtest is one minute, the test can usually be completed within 20 minutes.

Evaluation of validity

The validity of the test results was evaluated by comparing them with the subjective estimation of hand function and with a disability rating scale in a consecutive series of patients at the division of hand surgery, comprising 47 hands in 40 patients (10

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Fig.1. Eight Main hand-grips into which a normal grip pattern can be divided.

1. Pulp pinch: the object is held between the thumb and the index or the middle finger, or both.

2. Lateral pinch: the object is held between the thumb and the radial side of the index finger.

3. Tripod pinch: the object is surrounded by the thumb, index and middle finger. It May (but Need not have) contact with
The Sollerman Test comprises 20 activities of daily living tasks, four of which are featured in the pictures below:

Instructions for Administration and Scoring:

• Clinicia -administered standardized performance test.

• A test box is placed in front of the patients who are required to start each subtask in a seated position (but they may stand to complete a task). Three subtasks are completed using the hands bilaterally while the rest are completed with each hand separately. The subtests are timed and the performance is observed.
  
  o Ex. Pick up key, put into Yale lock and turn 90°.

• Administration time is usually 20-25 minutes.

Scoring:

• Scoring takes into account the time taken, level of difficulty displayed, and the quality of performance using the correct pinch or grip position.

Patients are then scored on a 5-point scale from 0 (task cannot be performed at all) to 4 (task

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## Sollermann Hand Function Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtest</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Hand-grip</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pick up key, put into Yale-lock and turn 90°.</td>
<td>Yale-Jock with bolts mounted on a vertical wall 30 cm above bottom level. Yale-key placed on the bottom of the box.</td>
<td>Pick up the key, put it into the lock and turn 90° in pronation so that the bolts disappear.</td>
<td>Pulp Pinch, lateral Pinch.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pick up the coins from flat surface, put into purses mounted on the wall.</td>
<td>Four coins of different size placed on the bottom of the box. Two purses mounted on the wall, 20 cm above bottom level.</td>
<td>Pick up the coins, one at a time, and put two coins in each purse.</td>
<td>Pulp pinch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Close and open zips.</td>
<td>Two purses mounted on the wall with zips of different size.</td>
<td>Close the zips and then open them again.</td>
<td>Pulp pinch, lateral pinch.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pick up coins from purses.</td>
<td>See subtest 2.</td>
<td>Pick up the coins, one at a time from the purses and place them on the bottom of the box.</td>
<td>Pulp pinch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pick up wooden blocks, lift over edge.</td>
<td>Two wooden blocks, size 7.5 cm and 10 cm, respectively, placed on the bottom of the box with edges of 5 cm.</td>
<td>Pick up the blocks, lift them over the edge and place them on the table in front of the box.</td>
<td>Five-finger pinch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lift iron over edge.</td>
<td>Iron, weight 3 kg, placed on the bottom of the box with edges of 5 cm.</td>
<td>Lift the iron over the edge and place it on the table in front of the box.</td>
<td>Transverse volar grip. Hand in pronation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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