A Template to Improve the Jebsen-Taylor Hand Function Test: A Comparative Study

INTRODUCTION
The Jebsen-Taylor Hand Function Test (JT) is a standardised assessment that relies upon precise test administration through the placement of a number of small items in each sub set. This set-up has been criticised in the literature as being time consuming and open to non-precision error in item placement. This study investigates whether application of a novel template board (see Figure) to the testing procedure of the JT enhances accuracy and reduces the clinical time taken to administer the test when compared to non-template based testing practices.

METHODS
The template board was marked to highlight where each test item should precisely be located during sub-test administration. Additionally, three therapists completed ten timed trials each in test preparation and setting up subtests 2, 3, 6 and 7 with and without the template to assess efficiency.

RESULTS
Results show that set up without using a template resulted in an average total of 10% accuracy in the subtest 2, 0% accuracy in the subtest 3, and 3.33% accuracy in subtests 6 and 7. The acceptable value on these tests to demonstrate accuracy is 100% (p <0.05). The results also demonstrate that the total time to complete test set up was significantly less when using the template board (p<0.05).

CONCLUSION
This study demonstrates the difficulty in achieving accuracy without a template board and the associated inefficiencies. The availability of standardised assessments that are easy to use in clinical practice and that have sound reliability, validity and responsiveness are necessary to objectively and accurately measure hand function.

FIGURE: A Template for the Jebsen-Taylor Hand Function Test (not to scale) – the JT Template©SHSCT2010

This project was identified as a research project by the SHSCT OT Research Group. The Jebsen-Taylor Hand Function Test is a commonly used outcome measure and it has been used as such in over 135 research studies.

The JT Template was shortlisted and was runner-up for a HSC Innovations Award in 2010.

Results have been disseminated at national and international conferences:
• The Combined Meeting of the British Society of Surgery of the Hand and British Association Hand Therapists 2010, Royal College of Surgeons, London

• The International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand Congress 2013, New Delhi

This study has recently been accepted for publication in the peer-reviewed journal: Hand Therapy

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