The Action Research Arm Test: Is it necessary for patients being tested to sit at a standardized table?

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Objective: To validate results obtained from administering the Action Research Arm Test (ARAT) at tables of a common height on persons who have experienced a stroke.

Design: Each subject was tested three times with the ARATs while sitting at three different tables: a table specially designed for the test and two generally available tables similar in height to the standard table. The patients were randomly and equally assigned to three different raters and to three different tables in accordance with a counterbalanced design. All evaluations were completed within a two-day period.

Subjects: Sixty-one patients who had had only one stroke (mean age, 63.3yr; median time since stroke onset, 81 days; mean ARAT score administered at the standard table, 33.8) participated in this study.

Results: The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for the total scores obtained using the ARAT at the different tables was 0.99, indicating very high agreement. The ICCs were also very high in each of the subscales.

Conclusion: The results of this study support the use of the ARAT at common tables roughly similar in height to the originally designed table.