

Three- Jaw Chuck Pinch Strength and its Correlation with Hand thickness in Electronics Technicians

Shahnawaz Akter¹, Moushumi Taher Asha², Shamsur Rahman³, Shamim Ara⁴, Segupta Kishwara⁵, Sunjida Shahriah⁶

Abstract

Context: The three jaw chuck pinch refers to an act where placing the object between the pad of the distal phalanx of the thumb opposing the pads of the distal phalanges of both the index finger and the middle finger. Pinch strength is generally influenced by the health status and level of physical activity of a person.

Objectives: The present study was planned to correlate the three-jaw chuck pinch strength with hand thickness in electronics technicians working in Dhaka Metropolitan City. The data obtained from the study may be used as a base line for other professions as well as for research in our country.

Materials & Methods: A cross sectional, analytical study was carried out in the department of Anatomy, Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka during the period of July 2015 to June 2016 on 100 adult male electronics technicians and 100 adult sedentary workers. Electronics technicians were considered as case group and sedentary workers were considered as control group. Case group was further subdivided according to their working experiences. Study subjects were selected by convenient purposive sampling technique. Hand thickness was measured by digital slide calipers and pinch gauge was used to measure the three-jaw chuck pinch strength.

Results: The mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength was significantly higher ($P < 0.05$) in case group than in the control group. Significant difference was also observed between case group and control group in the mean hand thickness ($P < 0.05$). Mean hand thickness was greater in case group than that of control group. Three-jaw chuck pinch strength showed significant positive correlation with hand thickness in case group. Case group was further subdivided according to their working experiences, the mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength and hand thickness was significantly higher ($P < 0.05$) in more working experience group than in less working experience group.

Conclusion: Three-jaw chuck pinch strength showed significant positive correlation with hand thickness.

Key words: Three-jaw chuck pinch, pinch gauge, hand thickness

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Anatomy, Mark's Medical College and Dental Unit, Dhaka,

²Assistant Professor, Department of Anatomy, Bashundhara Ad- din Medical College, Dhaka

³Assistant Professor, Department of Anatomy, Gazi Medical College, Khulna

⁴Professor and Head of the Department of Anatomy, Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College, Dhaka

⁵Professor, Department of Anatomy, Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka

⁶Professor and Head of the Department of Anatomy, Mark's Medical College, and Dental Unit Dhaka

Correspondence: Dr Shahnawaz Akter

Email: himupoly2005 @gmail.com

Introduction

The human hand is a prehensile part of upper limb endowed with grasping and precision movements for skill works. Prehensile movements of the hand have been described as three basic forms of grip, namely precision, power and hook grips. In precision grip, an object is held by the pulp surface of the thumb and the fingers which place themselves opposite to each other and small movements of the digits are carried out skillfully. Pinch grip is an example of precision grip.¹ Despite the technological advancements in many

manufacturing industries, hands and fingers are still primary tools for high precision manufacturing work.² The human hand is one of the most sophisticated and complex anatomical structures in the body.³ It is not a fixed, static structure but a dynamic sensory motor organ.⁴ To perform such sophisticated functions the human hand has been equipped with both mechanical and sensory capabilities.³ Non powered hand tool operation and manual assembly are the typical activities, in which pinching is usually applied.⁵ The human hand is capable of pinching, moving and placing objects without rough impact because of the softness of human finger tips.⁶ Pinch strength is categorized as isometric strength.⁷ Pinch strength is the backbone of pinch grip. The majority of the inward force is generated by the long flexor tendon of forearm. This force is balanced by one or more fingers of the same hand applying a force back towards the thumb. Strength of the fingers is greatly influenced by the flexion and extension of the wrist.⁸

Pinch strength depends on factors such as occupation, grip span, position of the thumb, position of the elbow and position of the arm, torque directions, contact surface orientations, object shape and size. Manual labourers exert stronger three-jaw chuck pinch compared to sedentary and skill labourers.⁹ There are four types of pinch techniques such as three-jaw chuck pinch, pulp pinch, tip pinch and lateral pinch.⁶ In three-jaw chuck pinch, force was exerted between the pad of the index and middle fingers together and the pad of the thumb, through the centre of the opposing pads.¹⁰ The muscles that contribute to pinch grips include both the intrinsic and extrinsic musculatures of hand and forearm.¹¹ Workers in various occupations such as electronics technicians, rock climbers, musicians, dentists, carpenters use pinch techniques for their daily work.¹² According to Ager, cited by Ertem et al¹³ pinch strength increases from early childhood towards adolescence and with increasing age pinch strength decreases. Pinch strength exertions by males on dominant hand was found to be significantly higher.³

Electronics service technicians are responsible for installing and repairing home electronics

equipment. They use pinch grip for high precision tasks, such as connecting or disconnecting wires, assembling small electronics parts.

The current study aims the correlation of pinch strength and hand thickness between the electronics technicians of Dhaka Metropolitan City and sedentary workers of the same region.

Materials and Methods

A cross sectional, analytical study, was carried out in the department of Anatomy, Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka during the period of July 2015 to June 2016 with 100 adult male electronics technicians (case group) and 100 adult male sedentary workers (control group), age ranging from 25-45 years both the groups residing in Dhaka Metropolitan City. 100 participants of case group were further divided into two subgroups according to their working experience. Among them 53 were in less working experience (5-10 years) group and 47 were in more working experience (11-15 years) group. Electronics technicians having minimum 5 years working experience were selected from different electronics repair shops of Dhaka, and they used tools like screwdrivers, tweezers etc for their work handling them using three-jaw chuck pinch. Sedentary worker had no prior experience in jobs which involve the use of tools requiring the use of three-jaw chuck pinch. After obtaining informed written consent from all the study subjects data were documented in a pre-designed data sheet. Prior to consent they were explained the aim and purpose of the research. The subjects were assured of the confidentiality of the study.

Exclusion criteria

- congenital deformity of hand such as syndactyly, polydactyly etc.
- acquired hand deformity due to burn contracture, fracture or any surgical procedure of hand.

After collection of data, statistical analysis was done by the software, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows, Version 22.0. All data were expressed as mean \pm SD (standard Deviation) as appropriate. Mean values of different parameters were compared

to see the differences between two groups by using Student's unpaired 't' test. Correlation was done by Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Test. Ethical clearance has been taken from the ethical review Committee (ERC) of Dhaka Medical College.

The pinch strength measurements were recorded by a pinch gauge which is inexpensive, easy to administer, and are considered to provide repeatable measurements, with the subject sitting on a chair with the elbow flexed at 90° and wrist in neutral position. Subjects were asked to exert his maximal voluntary contraction (MVC) on the pinch gauge and to hold that force for three second. To overcome the fatigue, subject was given one minute resting period between each exertion (Fig 1). Mean value of three exertion was taken into account. Hand thickness was measured by using digital slide calipers. Subject's middle finger was extended, with the slide calipers measure the maximum thickness of the metacarpophalangeal joint of digit III.



Fig-1: Photograph showing measurement of Three-jaw chuck pinch strength by using pinch gauge

Ethical Clearance

The study was approved by Ethical Review committee of Dhaka Medical College.

Results

Mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength was 7.80±0.77 kg and 13.96±1.46 kg and mean hand thickness was 14.98±0.81 mm and 20.56±1.66 mm in control group and case group respectively (Table I). Significant difference was observed between control group and case group in the mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength and hand thickness (P<0.001) where mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength and hand thickness was greater in case group than that of control group.

Table-I

Comparison of three- jaw chuck pinch strength and hand thickness between control group and case group

Variable	Control Group (n=100) (Mean ± SD)	Case Group (n=100) (Mean ± SD)	P value
Three- jaw chuck pinch Strength In kg	7.80 ± 0.77 (5.90 – 9.20)	13.96 ± 1.46 (11.10 – 16.50)	0.001*
Hand thickness in mm	14.98 ± 0.81 (14.00 – 17.35)	20.56 ± 1.66 (17.50 – 23.75)	0.001*

Figure in parentheses indicate range. SD=Standard Deviation

Comparison between control and case was done by Unpaired Student's 't' test.

ns= not significant, *=significant

Control group = sedentary worker

Case group = electronics technicians

Table-II
Comparison of three-jaw chuck pinch strength and hand thickness between different sub group of case group

Variable	Less working experience group (n=53) (Mean ± SD)	More working experience group (n=47) (Mean ± SD)	P value
Three-jaw chuck pinch Strength In kg	12.75 ± 0.85 (11.10 – 14.30)	15.32 ± 0.47 (14.50 – 16.50)	0.001*
Hand thickness In mm	19.29 ± 0.95 (17.50 – 21.31)	21.99 ± 1.01 (20.11 – 23.75)	0.001*

Figure in parentheses indicate range, SD=Standard Deviation

Comparison between sub group of case group was done by Unpaired Student's 't' test.

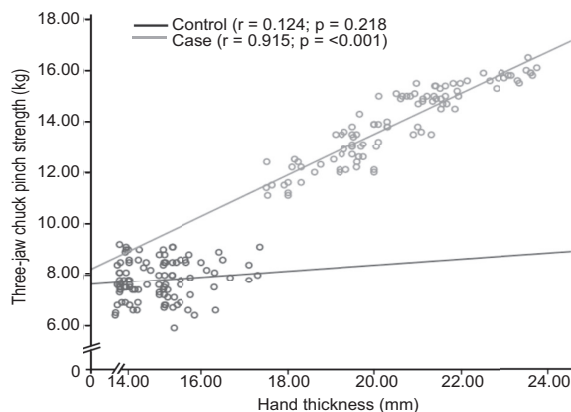
ns=not significant, *=significant

Sub group of case group was done depending on working experience in year.

Less working experience group = 5 – 10 years

more working experience group= 11-15 years

Mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength of less working experience group (5-10 years) and more working experience group (11-15 years) was 12.75±0.85 kg and 15.32±0.47 kg and mean hand thickness was 19.29±0.95 mm and 21.99±1.01 mm respectively (Table II). Statistically significant difference was observed between less working experience group and more working experience group in the mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength and in hand thickness (P<0.001) where mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength and hand thickness was lower in less working experience group than that of more working experience group .



Scattered diagram showed nonsignificant positive correlation with hand thickness in control group (r=+0.124, P=0.218) and significant positive correlation with hand thickness in case group (r=+0.915, P<0.001).

Discussion

Pinch has been identified as a basic yet crucial skill for daily task performance, and is used to assess general strength in order to determine work capacity. Pinch strength is one of the most important parameters of hand function. Regular exercise improves pinch strength. Any deterioration in pinching ability can impair activities of daily living.

In this study, correlation of three-jaw chuck pinch strength with hand thickness was discussed. Electronics technicians were selected for the present study on the basis of the observation that they regularly and repeatedly use pinch grip hundreds and thousands of times a day to get firm hold of the instrument to disassemble and reassemble equipment parts. Sedentary workers do not use the three-jaw-chuck pinch in their work.

The results of the present study were compared with the studies carried out by Dempsey and Ayoub,¹⁴ Mohammadian et al¹⁵ and Kaushik and Patra,¹⁶ Imrhan and Rahman .¹⁷

In the present study, the mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength of control group and case group was 7.80±0.78 kg and 13.96±1.47 kg respectively. The mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength was significantly higher (P<0.0001) in case group than in control group .

Dempsey and Ayoub¹⁴ found 6.6±2.19 kg mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength. Mohammadian et al¹⁵ found 10.3±2.7 kg mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength. The mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength of case group in this study was significantly higher ($P<0.0001$) than the findings of Dempsey and Ayoub and Mohammadian et al.

In the present study, the mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength was recorded 12.75±0.85 kg in less working experience group (5-10 years) and 15.32±0.47 kg in more working experience (11-15 years) group. The mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength was significantly higher ($P<0.0001$) in the more working experience group than in the less working experience group.

Kaushik and Patra¹⁶ reported 16.23±2.10 kg mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength in the group with 6-9 years working experience, which was significantly higher ($P<0.0001$) than that for less working experience group of the present study, and the researcher also recorded 13.42±2.43 kg mean three-jaw chuck pinch strength in the group with 10-14 years working experience which was significantly lower ($P<0.0001$) than that of the more working experience group of the present study.

The mean hand thickness was 14.98±0.81 mm and 20.56±1.66 mm in control group and case group respectively. There was significant difference observed between control group and case group in the mean hand thickness ($P<0.0001$). Mean hand thickness was greater in case group than that of control group. In the present study three-jaw chuck pinch strength showed significant positive correlation with hand thickness in case group ($r=+0.915$, $P<0.0001$).

In contrary Dempsey and Ayoub¹⁴ found 30.4±1.5 mm mean hand thickness which is significantly higher ($P<0.0001$) than the findings of the present study. The researchers also showed significant positive correlation between the three-jaw chuck pinch strength and hand thickness ($r= +0.8464$, $P<0.05$).

Imrhan and Rahman¹⁷ recorded 23.0±3.0 mm mean hand thickness which was significantly higher ($P<0.0001$) than the findings of the present study.

Conclusion

In this study, the three-jaw chuck pinch strength was significantly higher in electronics technicians. Significant positive correlation between three-jaw chuck pinch strength and hand thickness in electronics technicians was found. In case group, the more experienced subgroup had significantly higher three-jaw chuck pinch strength than the less experienced subgroup. And also significant difference in hand thickness was observed between the sub group. The study findings suggest the repetitive work increases three-jaw chuck pinch strength irrespective of age. The cause of increase hand thickness needed to be evaluated by further study.

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