

What and how do healthy young adults write?

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Introduction: Handwriting is an important activity for adults, and is commonly affected after stroke or traumatic brain injury. Yet little is known about the handwriting behaviours of adults with handwriting difficulties or healthy adults. **Aim:** This cross-sectional observational study aims to describe the handwriting behaviours of 10 healthy adults aged 20 to 24 years with a variety of occupations. **Methods:** Data were collected through a self-report survey and videotaped observational data. A novel digital pen was also used to collect all handwritten text over three days. This study replicated a similar study on the handwriting behaviours of older adults. Data from four of the 10 participants have been analysed using descriptive statistics. **Preliminary results:** The mean age of the first four participants was 21.75 years (SD 0.96). A tripod pengrip was used by three participants. The average writing speed was 97 letters/min (SD 20) when addressing an envelope, and 123 letters/min (SD 20) for the speed sub-test of the Jebsen-Taylor Test of Hand Function. Participants wrote on average 3 times per day (SD 3), with a median of 54 words per occasion (IQR 66). The most common reason for handwriting was note-taking (58%), to fulfil domestic, student or work roles. Most handwriting occasions involved self-generated text (81%), not copied text. Participants stood for 11% of handwriting occasions. Further, concurrent activities were completed during 82% of handwriting occasions. These results are surprisingly similar to a concurrent study of adults aged 65 years and over. Results for all 10 participants will be presented. **Conclusions:** Findings will contribute to the ongoing development of an ecologically valid adult handwriting assessment that encompasses common handwriting activities. Therapists attending the presentation will learn about activities and writing samples that should be considered in handwriting assessment and intervention, for both teenage and adult populations.

HANDWRITING IN HEALTHY PEOPLE AGED 65 YEARS AND OVER: AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY TO INFORM OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY HANDWRITING REHABILITATION

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Background: Handwriting is important for recording information and for communication. This daily occupation is often impaired due to neurological conditions. Handwriting retraining in adults is a common occupational therapy intervention. Children's handwriting has been more widely studied, and children's assessments often form the basis of assessments for measuring adult handwriting deficits. In contrast, little is known about why, in what context, and how adults handwrite in the general population. **Aim:** This project aims to describe the handwriting practices of 30 healthy adults aged 65 years and over. **Methods:** This cross-sectional observational study was granted ethics approval. Recruitment of 30 adults aged 65 to 90 years occurred via personal contact and snowballing. Participants used a digital pen for all their handwriting occasions over 3 days. Key handwriting features were recorded from the handwriting samples and participant logs. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics. **Results:** The mean age of participants was 75 years (SD 6.9). A tripod pengrip was used by 97% of the sample. Participants wrote on average 3 times per day, 21 words per sample. The most common reasons for handwriting were notetaking (23%) and puzzles (22%), to fulfill leisure and domestic roles. Most handwriting occasions involved self-generated text (92%) not copied text. Participants stood for 17% of handwriting occasions. Large variations were evident in letter size, slant and spacing. **Conclusion:** Results address some of the gaps in adult handwriting literature. Variability in the features of adult handwriting suggests that children's handwriting assessments techniques are unsuitable for adults. Findings will contribute to the ongoing development of an ecologically valid adult handwriting assessment and help inform handwriting rehabilitation for occupational therapists working with older adults.

Learning Outcome: Delegates will learn about the features of handwriting for unimpaired adults aged 65 years and over including legibility, errors, style and reasons for handwriting.