

RW question 9

Some studies have suggested that posture can influence cognition, but we should not overstate this phenomenon. A case in point: In a 2014 study, Megan O'Brien and Alaa Ahmed had subjects stand or sit while making risky simulated economic decisions. Standing is more physically unstable and cognitively demanding than sitting; accordingly, O'Brien and Ahmed hypothesized that standing subjects would display more risk aversion during the decision-making tasks than sitting subjects did, since they would want to avoid further feelings of discomfort and complicated risk evaluations. But O'Brien and Ahmed actually found no difference in the groups' performance.

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A) It presents the study by O'Brien and Ahmed to critique the methods and results reported in previous studies of the effects of posture on cognition.
- B) It argues that research findings about the effects of posture on cognition are often misunderstood, as in the case of O'Brien and Ahmed's study.
- C) It explains a significant problem in the emerging understanding of posture's effects on cognition and how O'Brien and Ahmed tried to solve that problem.
- D) It discusses the study by O'Brien and Ahmed to illustrate why caution is needed when making claims about the effects of posture on cognition.

Key	D
Domain	Craft and Structure
Skill	Text Structure and Purpose

Key Explanation: Choice D is the best answer. The passage asserts that “we should not overstate” the effect of posture on cognition and uses the O'Brien and Ahmed study as a “case in point” in support of that claim.

Distractor Explanations: Choice A is incorrect because although the passage indicates that O'Brien and Ahmed reached different conclusions from those of other researchers, it does not use the O'Brien and Ahmed study to criticize how those earlier studies were conducted or to directly challenge the accuracy of those studies' results. Choice B is incorrect because although the passage indicates that the results from studies finding a link between posture and cognition have been overstated, it offers no evidence that the O'Brien and Ahmed study has often been misunderstood. Choice C is incorrect because the passage suggests that although O'Brien and Ahmed were interested in studying the matter of posture and cognition, it does not indicate what these researchers thought before conducting their study or that the researchers set out specifically to solve a problem.