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A SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPIC STUDY OF
ORTHODONTIC ROOT RESORPTION IN HUMAN PREMOLAR
TEETH

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
SYNOPSIS	iii
TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
SIGNED STATEMENT	x
INTRODUCTION	xi
AIMS OF THE PROJECT	xiv
 Chapter 1	
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	1.1
 Chapter 2	
MATERIALS AND METHODS	
Clinical methods	2.1
Magnitude and duration of forces (Table 1)	2.4
Sectioning methods	2.7
Specimens rendered anorganic	2.11

	Page
Chapter 3	
FINDINGS	
Radiographic findings	3.1
Clinical findings	3.1
Scanning Electron Microscopic findings	3.1
Normal surface topography:	
Viewed without removal of organic components	3.3
Viewed after specimens rendered anorganic	3.4
Effect of intrusive force on root surface topography:	
Viewed without removal of organic components	3.12
Viewed in the anorganic state -	
effect of light forces (50g)	3.12
effect of medium forces (100g)	3.12
effect of heavy forces (200g)	3.12
effect of same force in different patients	3.25
site of resorption areas	3.25
Observations at high magnification of individual resorption areas	3.27
organic preparation	3.27
anorganic preparation	3.27
Rapid maxillary expansion results	3.33
Chapter 4	
DISCUSSION	4.1
Chapter 5	
CONCLUSIONS	5.1
Chapter 6	
APPENDIX	
Planes of sectioning teeth	6.1
Scanning electron microscope	6.2
Fixative	6.4
Soxhlet Extractor	6.5
Table showing area and depth of resorption on experimental teeth - Table 2	6.6
Chapter 7	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	7.1

SYNOPSIS

It has been shown by Kvam (1972b) that when a human premolar tooth was tipped buccally by a continuous force of 50 grams, the tissue located near the cemento-enamel junction was the first affected by pressure, followed by the mid-root area. Resorption started in the cementum after 10 days as small round cavities, approximately 6 micrometres in diameter. Kvam found that the resorption was characterised by extensive shallow resorptions composed of smaller round lacunae.

This project was undertaken to study the effects of the magnitude and duration of an intrusive force on the root surface topography of human premolar teeth. The material consisted of teeth from eleven patients, aged between 10 and 18 years who required the removal of first premolar teeth prior to orthodontic treatment. A metal ribbon arch bracket was directly bonded to the experimental premolar in each arch. The contralateral premolar of the same arch was used as a control, and a similar bracket was bonded to this tooth to rule out the effect of increased cheek pressure on the tooth due to the bracket thickness.

The experimental teeth were intruded with a light round archwire attached to the first molars, incisors and experimental premolar. Magnitudes of force used were 50 grams, 100 grams and 200 grams for durations of 14 days, 35 days and 70 days. The premolar teeth of two patients who had worn a fixed rapid palatal

expansion appliance were also examined for changes in root surface topography. These premolars were also extracted for orthodontic purposes. Following fixation and coating with carbon and gold, all teeth were examined in the scanning electron microscope.

Resorption was noted in all teeth that had been intruded with archwires for longer than 14 days, and was slightly more severe in teeth where heavy intrusive forces had been applied. Teeth that had been attached to the fixed rapid palatal expansion appliance showed severe resorption on the buccal surface of the premolars.

TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1	Intra-oral view of archwires - frontal	2.3
Fig. 2	Intra-oral view of archwires - right side	2.3
Fig. 3	Intra-oral view of archwires - left side	2.3
Fig. 4	Coating unit	2.8
Fig. 5	Siemens Autoscan Scanning Electron Microscope	2.9
Fig. 6	Specimen Holder	2.9
Fig. 7	Buccal root surface of a human mandibular premolar showing the gross morphology and surface charging	3.2
Fig. 8	Mesial surface of a human maxillary premolar showing fibres of the periodontal ligament	3.6
Fig. 9	Collagen fibre and erythrocytes on the buccal surface of a human maxillary premolar	3.6
Fig. 10	Periodontal ligament on the mesial root of a human mandibular first premolar	3.7
Fig. 11	Erythrocyte, fibrin and thrombocytes	3.7
Fig. 12	A collapsed twisted blood vessel in periodontal ligament	3.8
Fig. 13	Nerve in tissue attached to the apex of a mandibular premolar	3.8
Fig. 14	A fragment of alveolar bone detached during extraction of a maxillary first premolar	3.9
Fig. 15	Cracked, flaking cementum rendered anorganic	3.9
Fig. 16	Sharpey's fibre insertions as projections in acellular cementum. Anorganic preparation	3.10
Fig. 17	Sharpey's fibre insertions as depressions in cellular cementum. Anorganic preparation	3.10

Fig. 18	Sharpey's fibres showing hexagonal packing	3.11
Fig. 19	Resorption area on buccal surface of mandibular premolar showing base of resorption area after long duration of heavy force. Organic preparation	3.14
Fig. 20	Human premolar. Same resorption area as Fig. 19. Anorganic preparation	3.14
Fig. 21	Buccal root surface of maxillary premolar showing minimal resorption area produced after 14 days application of light force	3.15
Fig. 22	Control premolar to Fig. 21	3.15
Fig. 23	Buccal aspect of maxillary premolar showing resorption after 35 days application of light force	3.16
Fig. 24	Control premolar to Fig. 23	3.16
Fig. 25	Buccal surface of maxillary premolar showing deep resorption produced after long application of light force	3.17
Fig. 26	Control premolar to Fig. 25	3.17
Fig. 27	Buccal surface of mandibular premolar showing shallow resorption after short duration of 100g force	3.18
Fig. 28	Control premolar to Fig. 27	3.18
Fig. 29	Buccal surface of mandibular premolar showing extensive resorption after 35 days intrusion by force of 100g	3.19
Fig. 30	Control premolar to Fig. 29	3.19
Fig. 31	Severe resorption areas produced by 70 days intrusion by force of 100g. Mandibular premolar	3.20
Fig. 32	Control premolar to Fig. 31	3.20
Fig. 33	Resorption produced by 70 days intrusion by force of 100g. Mandibular premolar	3.21

Fig. 34	Control premolar to Fig. 33	3.21
Fig. 35	Buccal root surface of maxillary premolar showing minimal resorption after 14 days intrusion by force of 200g	3.22
Fig. 36	Control premolar to Fig. 35	3.22
Fig. 37	Buccal root surface of mandibular premolar showing severe resorption produced by 70 days intrusion by force of 200g	3.23
Fig. 38	Control premolar to Fig. 37	3.23
Fig. 39	Buccal root surface of mandibular premolar showing resorption after 70 days intrusion by force of 200g	3.24
Fig. 40	Buccal root surface of maxillary premolar showing resorption caused by 35 days intrusion by force of 200g	3.24
Fig. 41	Buccal root surface of maxillary premolar showing resorption produced after 70 days intrusion by force of 50g	3.26
Fig. 42	Same experiment conditions as Fig. 41, but in a different patient showing similar resorption. Maxillary premolar	3.26
Fig. 43	Buccal root surface of mandibular premolar showing fibrous covering at edge of resorption. Organic preparation	3.29
Fig. 44	High magnification of floor of resorption area. Mandibular premolar	3.29
Fig. 45	Floor of resorption area on buccal root surface of mandibular premolar. Organic preparation	3.30
Fig. 46	Buccal surface of mandibular premolar showing greater detail in resorption defect after removal of organic covering	3.30
Fig. 47	Resorption edge passing through Sharpey fibres. Mandibular premolar	3.31
Fig. 48	Dentinal tubules in floor of resorption. Maxillary premolar	3.31

Fig. 49	Resorption lacuna showing repair by cellular cementum	3.32
Fig. 50	High magnification view of cellular cementum seen in Fig. 49	3.32
Fig. 51	Resorption observed in roots of tooth attached to a rapid expansion appliance. Organic preparation.	3.34
Fig. 52	Same tooth as Fig. 51, but rendered anorganic to show more detail of resorption	3.34
Fig. 53	Higher magnification of resorption seen in Fig. 51. Organic preparation.	3.35
Fig. 54	Higher magnification of resorption seen in Fig. 51. Anorganic preparation.	3.35
Fig. 55	Higher magnification of coronal area of root seen in Fig. 51. Organic preparation	3.36
Fig. 56	Higher magnification of coronal area of root seen in Fig. 51. Anorganic preparation	3.36
Fig. 57	Extensive resorption on buccal root of premolar to which has been attached a fixed maxillary expansion appliance. Anorganic preparation	3.37
Fig. 58	High power view of anorganic preparation of root resorption showing exposed dentinal tubules	3.37
Fig. 59	Long cone periapical radiograph of first premolar and molar teeth after rapid maxillary expansion and retention	3.38
Fig. 60	Anorganic preparation from Boyde and Hobdell (1969), human primary lamellar bone with similar appearance to repairing cementum resorption	4.13
Fig. 61	Human premolar repairing cementum resorption. From Jones and Boyde (1972)	4.13
Fig. 62	Planes of sectioning teeth for Scanning Electron Microscope	6.1
Fig. 63	Scanning Electron Microscope - block diagram	6.2
Fig. 64	Soxhlet Extractor	6.5

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SIGNED STATEMENT

This project report is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Dental Surgery in The University of Adelaide.

This report contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any University. To the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except when due reference is made in the text of the report.

MICHAEL R. HARRY.

INTRODUCTION

Bone may not always be the only hard tissue resorbed during orthodontic tooth movement. Other tissues resorbed have often included cementum and dentine of the root, a phenomenon termed root resorption. Root resorption can be an unfavourable sequel to orthodontic tooth movement (Ketcham, 1929; Reitan, 1969; Newman, 1975; Goldson and Henrikson, 1975). Investigations on the occurrence of resorption in the roots of untreated permanent teeth have demonstrated sites of resorption, particularly the surface facing the direction of physiological movement (Henry and Weinmann, 1951). These authors found a high degree of bilateral similarity in the number of resorption areas per tooth.

The topography of tooth root surfaces has been examined using the light microscope (Reitan, 1974) and the scanning electron microscope (Lester and Boyde, 1970; Jones and Boyde, 1972; Kvam, 1972a). Only two studies (Kvam, 1973a and 1973b) are known in the literature describing a scanning electron microscopic study of changes on the cementum of human teeth following orthodontic tooth movement. Kvam only studied the effect of varying the duration of a fixed force of 50 grams. He found that the cementum located near the cemento-enamel junction was the first affected, followed by the cementum of the mid-root area. Resorption started after 10 days as small cavities in the cementum, and after 30 days extensive resorptions involving dentine had formed.

Many investigations have shown that when a force is applied to a tooth, areas of pressure and tension are created in the periodontium (Schwarz, 1932; Oppenheim, 1942; Moyers and Bower, 1950; Reitan, 1951 and Glickman et al, 1970). Reitan (1960) described the changes occurring in the periodontium during orthodontic tooth movement. He described the sites of pressure and bone resorption occurring in different types of tooth movement. Rygh (1977) showed that the elimination of hyalinized tissue removed the cementoid leaving a raw cementum surface. This raw surface was susceptible to attack by odontoclasts.

Massler and Malone (1954) suggested that there is an individual susceptibility to root resorption during tooth movement. It has also been claimed that there are differences in the susceptibility to root resorption due to local factors (Oppenheim, 1942), anatomical factors related to the maxilla or mandible (Ketcham, 1929; Hemley, 1941), tooth type (Massler and Malone, 1954) and also general causes such as metabolism or endocrine factors (Becks, 1936).

In an excellent study of apical root resorption under orthodontic therapy, Phillips (1955) found no correlation between the degree of resorption and such factors as sex, age at the onset of orthodontic treatment, length or method of orthodontic treatment, or the amount of orthodontic treatment involved. Newman (1975) used the records of forty seven patients, forty-one of whom had been treated orthodontically, in a radiographic investigation of possible aetiologic

factors in root resorption. He found that the maxillary incisors and premolars, and the mandibular premolars showed the greatest incidence of apical shortness.

Kvam (1973b) only studied the effect of duration of applied force on the root surface. In view of the limited nature of Kvam's study, it is apparent that further investigations are required to broaden our knowledge in this field. Hence the present investigation was undertaken to provide additional clinical information on this subject.

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of the present investigation was to study the effect of:

1. different magnitudes of intrusive forces on the root surface topography of human maxillary and mandibular premolar teeth
2. different durations of intrusive forces on the root surface topography of human premolar teeth
3. the root surface topography of teeth that have borne a fixed rapid palatal expansion appliance. To compare the topography of these root surfaces with the results of aims 1 and 2 above.