

Evaluation of the Stress Pattern in the Resin-Based Composite Restoration of an Endodontically Treated Premolar Tooth: A Finite Element Analysis Study

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Abstract

This study aimed to assess the stress values in an endodontically treated maxillary premolar restored with a direct placement of adhesive composite restoration. An ortho-grade root-treatment was performed on a single-rooted maxillary premolar. Three types of cavities were prepared as follow: (1) O: Occlusal access cavity (one surface), (2): MO: access cavity with mesial extension equal to one third of bucco-palatal cusp width and 1 mm above the cemento-enamel junction (two surfaces), (3) MOD: access cavity with mesial and distal extensions equal to one third of bucco-palatal cusp width and 1 mm above the cemento-enamel junction (three surfaces). After each restorative procedure, the restored-tooth complex was scanned using a micro-computed tomography scanner. A three-dimensional (3D) structure for each individual layer, including the enamel, dentine, composite restoration, and the gutta-percha of the restored tooth complex, was generated with interactive medical image processing software, whereas the biomechanical behavior and stress pattern distribution were evaluated using a finite element analysis software programme. The results revealed that the MO-restored tooth complex showed lower stress values than the one-surface (O) and three-surface (MOD) restored cavities. The generated stress values in the two-surface (MO) restored cavity in the present study were less than that of the one-surface (O) or three-surface (MOD) restored cavities. It can be concluded that, by increasing the C-factor, higher stress values are more likely to occur in the restored tooth. Greater stress values were observed in endodontically treated tooth with MOD restoration, which might have negative consequences on the fracture strength of the whole structure.

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Introduction

Biomechanical behavior of the endodontically treated tooth restored with a direct placement of adhesive composite restoration has not been clearly investigated. Due to the methodological differences of the previous studies, such as tooth selection, type of restoration and evaluation methods, interpretation and general application are limited.

An endodontically treated tooth can be

restored with a more conservative approach or an extensive restoration, depending on the amount of remaining coronal tooth structure. The best restoration should allow a restored tooth to react in a pattern similar to the sound intact tooth under occlusal loads¹ without deformation. If the remaining coronal tooth structure is adequate for a composite restoration, the material has to store an excellent quantity of energy to limit the cuspal movements,¹ and should be able to dissipate the stresses well within the structure.

Composite resin has evolved over the decades. Apart from changes in filler loading, size and shape, the monomer structure and modification of the polymerisation reaction has also been introduced.² This type of restorative material can be classified according to different characteristics, such as curing mechanism, viscosity and filler size. Despite having various choices of composite restorative materials,

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factors like the location of tooth to be restored, the size of cavity and aesthetic demands dictate the choice of one material over another.^{2, 3}

Polymerisation shrinkage in the resin composite is a complex mechanism.⁴⁻⁶ The stress can develop at the interfaces during the polymerisation process and predominantly occurs due to the contraction of the resin matrix,^{5, 7-9} which compromises the dimensional stability of the restorative materials.⁷ When the contraction of resin is obstructed, it is unable to resist sufficient polymerising flow to compensate for the original volume.⁷ This circumstance creates rapid build-up of stress at the tooth-composite interface,^{5, 10} eventually interferes with the marginal seal and potentially propagates the existing cracks.¹¹

The configuration of tooth cavity, also known as the C-factor, is the ratio of the bonded to the unbonded surface.^{8, 12} It has been shown to influence the formation of polymerisation shrinkage stress in the previous study⁸ Other factors that may influence the formation of this stress include volumetric polymerisation shrinkage, elastic modulus, adaptation of composite resins to the internal aspect of the cavity,⁸ amount of restorative material, polymerisation reaction, material's formulation⁶ and cavity depth.¹³

Biomechanical behavior of the tooth under load has been measured with various methods such as photoelastic model,¹⁴⁻¹⁶ strain gauge techniques,¹⁷ two dimensional (2D) Finite Element Analysis (FEA),^{18, 19} combination of strain gauges and 2D FEA,^{17, 20-23} sophisticated three dimensional (3D) FEA,²⁴⁻³¹ and a combination of strain gauges and 3D FEA.³² 3D FEA is now a more preferred method because it offers higher anatomic precision compared to 2D FEA,²³ morphologically more accurate resemblance of tooth²⁵ and more comprehensive method to evaluate the stresses developed in the entire tooth structure.²⁴ These advantages might explain the use of 3D FEA in other aspect in dentistry.³³

The aim of this study is to evaluate the stress values in an endodontically treated maxillary premolar restored with a direct placement of the adhesive composite restoration.

Materials and methods

Preparation for root canal procedure

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethical Research Committee of the School of Clinical Dentistry at the University of Sheffield, UK. An intact, single-rooted maxillary premolar tooth, with a fully formed root that was extracted for orthodontic treatment, was selected for the study.

A standard access cavity, coronal flaring with Gates Glidden drills were done on the tooth and the root canal terminus was established at 0.5 mm short of radiographic apex. Apical instrumentation was done until size 40 K Flexo files followed by a step back preparation. Cold lateral compaction was done using the ISO gutta-percha (GP) with zinc oxide eugenol-based root canal sealer. The GP was cut 2mm below the cemento-enamel junction (CEJ) and vertically compacted. Glass ionomer cement (GC Fuji IX GP EXTRA GC Corporation Tokyo, Japan) (GIC) was placed 2 mm thick above the GP.

Preparation for O, MO and MOD restorations, and direct placement of the adhesive composite restoration

Occlusal restoration (one-surface restored cavity)

The restored access cavity served as an occlusal (O) restoration. The cavity was etched with 37% phosphoric acid followed by water-rinsing and air-drying. Bonding agent was applied and light cured for 10 seconds, and the cavity was restored with composite resin (Filtek™ Supreme XTE Universal Restorative 3M ESPE, USA). Scanning was carried out after the completion of the occlusal restoration (O), using micro-computed tomography (micro-CT). C-factor was 5:1.

Mesio-occlusal restoration (two-surface restored cavity)

For the mesio-occlusal (MO) restoration, a cavity was prepared on the same tooth. The mesial cavity was prepared without removing the existing O restoration with the aid of an operating microscope to distinguish the tooth structure and the occlusal composite restoration. Mesial cavity dimension was prepared as follows:

Cavity width: One third of bucco-palatal cusp width

Cavity depth: 1 mm above CEJ

The restorative procedure was similar to the O restoration, and the micro-CT scanning was carried out after the completion of MO restoration. C-factor was 4:2.

Mesio-occluso-distal restoration (three-surface restored cavity)

For the mesio-occlusal-distal (MOD) restoration, a cavity was prepared on the same tooth. The distal cavity was prepared without removing the existing MO restoration with the aid of an operating microscope to distinguish the tooth structure and the O composite restoration. Distal cavity dimension was prepared as follows:

Cavity width: One third of bucco-palatal cusp width

Cavity depth: 1 mm above CEJ

A similar technique for restoring the distal cavity was conducted, followed by micro-CT scanning. C-factor was 3:3.

Micro CT scanning

A high-resolution micro-CT scanner (Sky scan 1172 microCT; SkyScan, Aartselaar, Belgium) was used to scan the endodontically treated tooth with the O, MO and MOD restorations. A resolution of 11.65 µm (distance between slices) was selected to obtain a high-accuracy image. Reconstruction of the dataset from micro-CT scanning was done using NRecon Reconstruction software (Sky scan 1172 micro-CT; SkyScan, Aartselaar, Belgium). The reconstructed images were resized using Data Viewer software version 1.5.0.0. The output format of the acquired data was selected as a bitmap (bmp) file.

3D-image generation

Reconstruction of the 3D images was done using an interactive medical image processing software, Mimics Version 16.0 (Materialize Co. Ltd.). Voxel dimension was set similar to the slice distance, and 11.65 µm resulted in slices as thin as one voxel thick. A total number of 600 slices in each sample was involved in this process. Smoothing was done in Mimics software by using automatic smoothing

function to make the STL file suitable for meshing in Hypermesh.

Finite Element Model (FEM) and load application

The images were imported to the Finite Element (FE) software (Hypermesh version 11.0, Altair Engineering Inc). This software allowed high resolution of the geometrical structure by optimising geometric editing and mesh generation, including mesh convergence test, thereby provided a direct link between geometry and FE. All structures, the dentine, enamel, GP, GIC and composite resin were assumed to be perfectly bonded to each other to allow smooth stress distribution within the structure and no defects were present at all interfaces. The types of element and number of nodes and element in all models were shown in Table 1.

Samples	Number of nodes	Number of elements	Types of element
O restoration	174, 350	916, 355	Tetrahedral
MO restoration	172, 422	905, 283	Tetrahedral
MOD restoration	170, 780	889, 738	Tetrahedral

Table 1. Number of nodes, elements and types of element in all samples.

After the 3D volume meshes, a boundary condition (zero displacement) was applied at the external root surface where all nodes were fixed in all three axes, X, Y and Z. Material properties, as shown in Table 2, were assigned to the FEM. Static vertical loading of 150 N was applied on buccal incline of palatal cusp and palatal incline of buccal cusp with a total of 300 N for all samples. The types of element and number of nodes and element in all models were shown in Table 1.

Tooth structures/ Materials	Elastic modulus/Young's modulus (MPa)	Poisson ratio	References
Enamel	84, 100	0.3	13, 28, 34
Dentine	18, 600	0.31	13, 18, 26, 27, 30, 31, 35-37
Composite resin (Filtek™ Supreme XTE Universal Restorative 3M ESPE, USA)	12, 700	0.35	38
Glass Ionomer Cement (GC Fuji IX GP EXTRA GC Corporation Tokyo, Japan)	16, 900	0.3	39
Gutta percha	0.69	0.45	18, 30, 40, 41

Table 2. Material properties of tooth structures, GP and restorative materials.

Results

The cloud atlas of the von Mises stress was calculated for each sample to measure the stresses developed within each structure. The data was transformed into a color maps for a better understanding of the stresses.

The generated stress in composite resin of O restoration was higher compare to the MO and MOD restorations, possibly due to the influence of C-factor (Fig. 1).

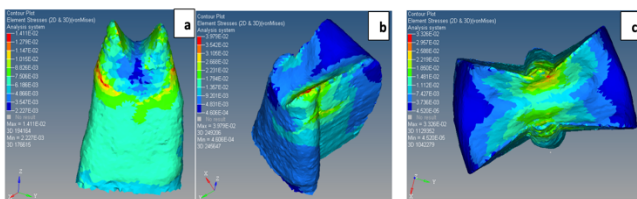


Figure 1. Distribution of stresses in composite resin of all samples. (a) O restoration; (b) MO restoration; (c) MOD restoration.

However, the generated stress in dentine of the MOD restoration was higher compared to the O and MOD restoration. This could be due to the compromised tooth structure in the MOD restoration (Fig. 2).

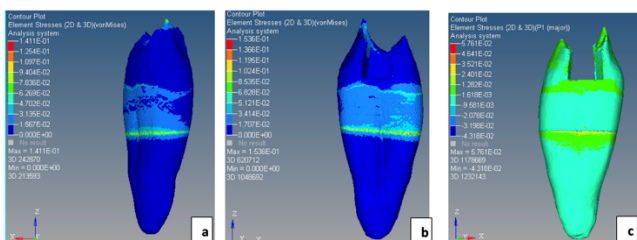


Figure 2. Distribution of stresses in dentine of all samples. (a) O restoration; (b) MO restoration; (c) MOD restoration.

With regard to the generated stress in the enamel of all types of restorations, lower stress could be seen except at the buccal and palatal regions, where the load was applied (Fig. 4). A lower generated stress pattern was also seen in the GP of all types of restorations, but the highest stress was seen at the interface of GP and GIC (Fig. 3 and 5). Based on the cloud atlas of the von Mises stress, the generated stress in GIC was higher than GP, which could be attributed to the higher elastic modulus of GIC. In addition, the generated stress at the interface of GP and GIC was higher, probably due to the huge different in the elastic modulus, interrupting the distribution

of stress between these structures and resulting in the concentration of stress at the interface. Table 3 represents the peak value of von Mises stress in all structures (enamel, dentine, composite, GIC and GP) in the three types of restorations.

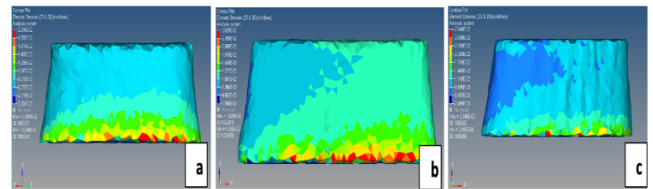


Figure 3. Distribution of stresses in GIC of all samples. (a) O restoration; (b) MO restoration; (c) MOD restoration.

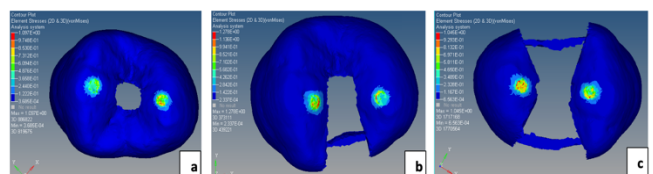


Figure 4. Distribution of stresses in enamel of all samples. (a) O restoration; (b) MO restoration; (c) MOD restoration.

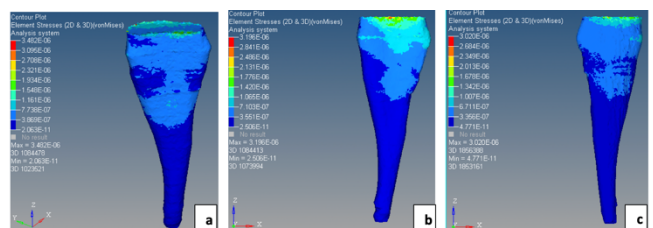


Figure 5. Distribution of stresses in GP of all samples. (a) O restoration; (b) MO restoration; (c) MOD restoration.

Samples	Enamel (MPa)	Dentine (MPa)	Composite (MPa)	GIC (MPa)	GP (MPa)
O restoration	8.54	1.11	1.28	1.68	2.35
MO restoration	1.00	1.12	3.03	2.10	2.46
MOD restoration	8.25	9.56	2.57	2.39	2.37

Table 3. Peak value of von Mises stress in all structures.

Discussion

Posterior teeth are prone to multiple forces of varying natures.⁴² Therefore, the stiffness of the dental restorative materials is particularly important at the tooth-composite interfaces.⁴² The software used in this study is similar to one used by,⁴² and it is important to note that it is not programmed to assess model

failure; it can only assess the intensity of stresses developed within the structures. The analysis of von Mises stress values revealed that lower stress values were observed in the MO restoration. This could be due to a slightly lower C-factor compared to O restoration, which made the distribution of stress in the structure appear more homogenous. Despite the MOD restoration having the lowest C-factor, the generated stress values were high, particularly in the enamel and dentine. This could be attributed to the significant loss of coronal tooth structure where the dissipation of stresses was compromised, and the generated stress was concentrated in the remaining tooth structure. Future research on mechanical testing is required to validate this data. This finding was corroborated with the other study, in which the author suggested significant stress concentration in an endodontically treated tooth with extensive restorative procedure.²⁶ Furthermore, greater cuspal movement was also observed in the MOD cavity preparation,^{1, 43} and this might increase risk of tooth fracture. Apart from higher generated stress values in MOD restoration, higher stress concentration at the loading points in the present study was also seen, and this was corroborated with the previous studies.^{1, 42}

It has been recommended to restore the tooth with the restorative materials that have an elastic modulus similar to tooth structure, so that the biomechanical behaviour of the original tooth can be restored.^{22, 44} A more specific approach is to use the restorative materials with the elastic modulus at least equal to that of a dentine^{2, 45} to withstand deformation and cuspal fracture and the ability to dissipate stresses within the structure. Lower stress values and more homogenous distribution of stress were seen in the composite resins with a lower elastic modulus.^{1, 42} A greater stress-dissipating effect was seen in less rigid composite compared to the more rigid restorative materials. The composite resins with low elastic modulus demonstrated a more favourable biomechanical performance.⁴⁶ Composite resins with a high elastic modulus generate higher stress in the structure,^{1, 46} have less ability to absorb the stress and less able to buffer masticatory forces. Furthermore, materials with higher elastic modulus will develop higher stress values within the structure.¹ This could be due to the inability of this type of material to dissipate stresses within the structure, resulting

in lack of interface harmonisation and compromised marginal integrity. Therefore, the best restoration should allow the restored tooth to react in a pattern similar to the intact tooth when the external loads are applied.¹ For this reason, the composite resin with a lower elastic modulus was used in the present study.

Of all structures involved in this study, GP had the lowest elastic modulus, almost negligible. It could be stipulated that it could be indirectly involved in transferring stresses within the whole structure. Enamel, on the other hand, showed the highest elastic modulus, and rigid enamel does not deform under stress conditions; instead, it transfers the stress to the dentine and eventually, moves over it.²⁴ The higher stress value observed in MOD restoration in the present study contradicted the other studies,^{1, 42} possibly because the absence of a root canal procedure and the structural integrity of their model was less compromised. This might explain the differences in pattern of stress distribution even though the elastic modulus of the composite resin used in this study is almost similar.¹

The location of the boundary condition varied greatly, including at the base of bone,⁴⁷⁻⁵¹ the lateral and posterior surface of bone,⁵² the base and proximal surface of bone,³⁶ the periodontal ligament (PDL),^{53, 54} the root surface^{34, 42, 55} and below the CEJ,^{40, 56} depending on the geometrical structures investigated. In a recent study evaluating the temporomandibular joint, the superior surface of the articular eminence was selected as a fixed boundary location.⁵⁷ Some researchers have evaluated the biomechanical behaviours of the whole unit, involving supporting tooth structures such as PDL and alveolar bone. Some researchers, on the other hand, focused only on the tooth structure under ideal circumstances where the entire facial structures could be modelled to precisely; however, this is not a pragmatic approach⁵⁸ because of the complexity of the model. Therefore, to simplify the calculations, the distance of boundary condition should be reasonable from the load application and shows no overlapping between stress and strain fields.⁵⁸ Even though the involvement of the PDL was said to be important in modelling, the accuracy of the calculated stress and strain has made biomechanical behaviour of the PDL unclear.⁵⁹ In this study, the boundary condition was set on the external root surface to address the conditions.

Static and dynamic loading are common forces used in several in vitro studies for the investigation of mechanical properties of various structures. Static loading is a constant application of load,^{14, 17, 20, 60, 61} whereas dynamic loading is a repeated application of load in aqueous condition, with⁶²⁻⁶⁴ or without^{65, 66} thermal involvement.

Previous studies have used dynamic loading⁶²⁻⁶⁷ for the evaluation of fracture strength,^{62, 65} fracture mode,^{63, 65, 66} survival rate,⁶⁵ microleakage,⁶⁶ the stability of implant bridgeworks⁶⁷ and also the marginal adaptation of bulk-fill composite resins.⁶⁴ To simulate this loading, either a computer-controlled chewing simulator^{62, 67} or a cyclic loading machine^{65, 66} was used to create a chewing condition for fatigue testing. This could theoretically represent the chewing mechanism in the mouth; the human masticatory system is a dynamic process involving forces generated by the active muscles for determination of jaw movement and joint loading,⁶⁸ To date, there is still no investigation of the dynamic loading in FEA, because the simulation of dynamic modelling requires masticatory muscles and temporomandibular joint involvement, which is difficult to standardise. Such complexity could complicate the present study,⁶⁸ therefore, a static loading was used in this study because it was more appropriate to evaluate biomechanical behaviour of the structure.

The magnitude of the load in the previous studies ranged from 1 N^{18, 19} to 400 N^{15, 24} to simulate the mastication load. Higher load is rarely applied for biomechanical analysis because there is no resemblance to a clinical situation. It was predicted in a previous study²⁴ that the load between 700 N and 800 N can cause tooth fractures. Static loading was used in several studies by applying load vertically,^{14, 18, 24, 26, 27} oblique at 30 degrees,¹⁴ 45 degree,^{15, 16, 26, 29} 135 degrees¹⁹ and perpendicular²² to the long axis of the tooth, depending on the sample or tooth type. Due to the wide range of load magnitude, the average masticatory load of a premolar tooth, 300 N³¹ was applied to the model due to its clinical relevance.

Conclusions

Within the limitation of the present study, the conclusions were:

1. Lower stress values were seen in MO

restoration.

2. By increasing the C-factor, it is more likely to have higher stress values in the restored tooth.

3. Greater stress values were observed in an endodontically treated tooth with MOD restoration, which might have negative consequences on the fracture strength of the whole structure.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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