

NTEA ENDO FAX

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Intracanal Medicaments: Their Effect on Interappointment Pain

This Endo Fax is written in response to numerous requests regarding our philosophy on the use of intracanal medicaments in routine cases that are performed in multiple visits. Many of you have asked: "What do you use?"

Many chemicals - phenolics, aldehydes, antibiotics, steroids, calcium hydroxide, etc. - have been advocated by clinicians to reduce interappointment pain. However, because of the inherent properties of these medications, such as their toxicity and allergenicity, their routine use and value as interappointment adjuncts have been questioned by other clinicians.

Recently, there have been well documented studies about interappointment pain which support the findings of a classic study published by R. Walton, summarized below:

Purpose: The objective of Walton's study was to investigate the incidence and frequency of pain associated with the use of various interappointment intracanal medicaments.

Methods: The subjects in the study were an unselected and random group of patients. The medications studied were Buckley's formocresol, CMCP, eugenol, Cresatin, and iodine-potassium iodide. The use of a dry sterile cotton pellet was used as a comparison to the medicaments. Patients were given postcards with detailed instructions on how to assess and record their evaluation of the incidence and the level of discomfort. A total of 190 medicating treatment sessions were reported. The different treatment procedures of pulpotomy, pulpectomy, partial instrumentation, complete instrumentation, and obturation were compared and tested for significance.

Results and Conclusions:

There was no significant difference in frequency of post-op pain by intercomparison of the various medicaments and a dry cotton pellet, regardless of the pre-treatment pulpal and periapical diagnoses (vital vs. non-vital, infected vs. non-infected).

Based on this classic study (and numerous others supporting the same findings), we routinely use a sterile dry cotton pellet with no medicament.

Remember: The main disadvantage of all intracanal medicaments is that they may be antigenic, may induce periapical inflammation and may pass into the systemic circulation (Morse, Pathways of the Pulp, 1994)

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