

PREVALENCE OF CANDIDA IN ORAL CAVITY AND ROOT CANALS OF TEETH ASSOCIATED WITH APICAL PERIODONTITIS

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Candida is the commonest oral fungal pathogen isolated from the oral cavity. The occurrence of *Candida* in root canals has been reported by many researchers. The control and elimination of yeasts are very important during endodontic treatment because of their presence in dentinal tubules (dentinophilic), root canals and their role in periapical diseases. Hence the aim of this study was to determine the prevalence and diversity of *Candida* in the oral cavity and root canals associated with apical periodontitis in a group of patients seeking endodontic treatment at the Dental Hospital, Peradeniya.

Root canal samples from teeth associated with apical periodontitis and oral rinse samples were obtained from 43 (35 adults and 8 children) patients. The medical history including antibiotic therapy and clinical/radiographic data of teeth were recorded. The samples were then cultured on Sabouraud dextrose agar and identified by growth characteristics, colony morphology and using CHROMagar.

Candida isolates were recovered from 19 oral rinse samples and 4 root canal samples. Of the *Candida* species isolated from oral rinse samples, *C.albicans* was the most prevalent (84.2%). *C.tropicalis* was isolated from 2 out of four root canal samples.

The prevalence of *Candida* in root canals was 11.4%. The role of *Candida* in the initiation and perpetuation of periapical disease remains to be determined.

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