

EVALUATION OF FOUR CALCIUM HYDROXIDE  
PLACEMENT TECHNIQUES USING CBCT

by

Blake Aaron Donaldson, DDS  
Lieutenant, Dental Corps  
United States Navy

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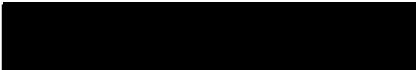
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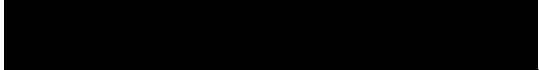
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Research Committee:

  
Glén M. Imamura, DDS, MS  
CAPT (ret), DC, USN  
Research Committee Chair

  
Calvin B. Suffridge, DDS, MS  
CDR, DC, USN  
Chairman, Endodontics Dept

  
John J. Neal, DDS, MS  
Program Director, Endodontics Dept

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Blake Aaron Donaldson, LT, DC, USN  
Endodontics Graduate Program  
Naval Postgraduate Dental School  
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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE DENTAL SCHOOL  
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## ABSTRACT

### EVALUATION OF FOUR CALCIUM HYDROXIDE PLACEMENT TECHNIQUES USING CBCT M.S., ENDODONTICS, 2019

Directed by: GLEN M. IMAMURA, RESEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR  
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE DENTAL SCHOOL

**Introduction:** Calcium hydroxide ( $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ ) is a commonly used inter-appointment antimicrobial medicament placed in root canal systems to kill bacteria and dissolve tissue. Previous studies have relied on 2-dimensional radiographs to evaluate  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  placement techniques. **Purpose:** Utilize 3-dimensional cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) to evaluate the effectiveness of four different intracanal  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  placement techniques. **Method:** A model was designed to mimic a maxillary first molar, curved second mesiobuccal canal, instrumented to size 30/.04 with a 12.5mm working length. Sixty models were 3D printed and divided into four groups (n=15) for  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  placement using: Lentulo spiral (LS), direct injection (DI), hand file (HF), and EndoActivator (EA), followed by CBCCT imaging. Measured  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  extent of fill and calculated the void volume within the canals using Invivo 5 software.  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  extrusion was detected using pH paper placed at canal exit. Data were analyzed using one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Tukey post-hoc comparisons ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). **Results:** Mean apical extent of fill: DI=11.83mm HF=12.73mm, LS=13.03mm, EA=13.5mm. Because EA reached maximum extent of fill (13.5 mm) every placement, it was excluded from  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  fill analysis due to lack of variability. ANOVA revealed no significant differences between the remaining 3 groups (P=0.06). Mean void volumes:

EA=0.76mm<sup>3</sup>, DI=0.96mm<sup>3</sup>, HF=1.97mm<sup>3</sup>, LS=2.19mm<sup>3</sup>. ANOVA revealed significant differences between the 4 groups (P<0.001). Tukey post hoc comparisons revealed EA and DI (P=0.878), and LS and HF (P=0.842) statistically equivalent. Comparisons of EA to LS (P<0.001) and HF (P<0.001), or DI to LS (P<0.001) and HF (P=0.002) were significant. Incidence of extrusion: LS=20%, DI=26.67%, HF=26.67%, EA=86.67%.

**Conclusions:** This model of instrumented curved canals found EndoActivator consistently filled the entire canal with the smallest volume of voids, but was more prone to extrusion compared to the other techniques. Of the remaining groups, direct injection demonstrated similar low void volumes with a relatively low incidence of extrusion.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CA	California
Ca(OH) <sub>2</sub>	Calcium Hydroxide
CBCT	Cone Beam Computed Tomography
Cm	centimeter
DI	Direct Injection
EA	EndoActivator
GA	Georgia
HF	Hand File
kV	kilovolt
LS	Lentulo Spiral
MA	Massachusetts
mA	milliamp
mL	milliliters
mm	millimeters
P	probability value (significance)
rpm	revolutions per minute
s	seconds
UT	Utah
µm	micrometers

## I. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The bacterial etiology of pulpal and periradicular disease pathogenesis has been firmly established in endodontic literature<sup>(1-6)</sup>. Accordingly, the ultimate goal of endodontic therapy is the complete removal of bacteria, their byproducts, and any tissue debris that could serve as a bacterial substrate, in order for healing to occur<sup>(7)</sup>. Byström demonstrated that many root canal systems still harbor bacteria after mechanical instrumentation<sup>(8)</sup>, even with the use of antimicrobial irrigation solutions<sup>(9)</sup>, and that bacterial numbers increased rapidly between appointments when an antimicrobial intracanal medicament was not used<sup>(8-10)</sup>. Additionally, it has been shown that endodontic treatment outcomes are significantly increased when a negative culture is obtained prior to obturation<sup>(11,12)</sup>. For these reasons, placement of an antimicrobial intracanal medicament has been recommended between appointments<sup>(13,14)</sup>.

Calcium hydroxide ( $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ ) was first introduced to dentistry (in the form of Calxyl) by Hermann, who recommended its use as a root canal filling in 1920<sup>(15)</sup>. Matsumiya and Kitamura published the first significant English language calcium hydroxide study in 1960, demonstrating that  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  paste killed bacteria and allowed periapical healing in experimentally infected dog teeth<sup>(16)</sup>. Many subsequent studies have supported the antimicrobial action of  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ <sup>(17-20)</sup>. It has also been demonstrated that  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  is able to proteolytically dissolve pulp tissue<sup>(21-23)</sup>, and to degrade bacterial lipopolysaccharide<sup>(24,25)</sup>. Although  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  is capable of diffusing through dentinal tubules<sup>(26,27)</sup>, it must be in direct contact to dissolve pulpal tissue, and to exert its maximum antimicrobial effects<sup>(28,29)</sup>.

Because of the need for direct contact, the goal of Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> placement should be a dense and homogenous three-dimensional fill of the entire canal. Any voids in the Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> fill could harbor bacteria or undissolved necrotic tissue. Several studies have been published with the aim of determining the most effective Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> placement technique<sup>(30-39)</sup>. Traditionally, Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> placement has been performed using hand files, Lentulo spirals, and by direct injection. The EndoActivator is a handheld device with disposable agitation tips designed to provide subsonic activation as an adjunct to canal irrigation. The EndoActivator has been shown to be effective in Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> removal from the canal<sup>(40)</sup>, and has been suggested as a method for intracanal placement<sup>(41)</sup>, though only one study has evaluated it for this purpose<sup>(42)</sup>. A major limitation of previous Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> placement studies is the use of traditional two-dimensional radiographs to subjectively evaluate fill quality<sup>(30-39,42)</sup>.

Cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) is an imaging modality that is increasingly used in endodontics<sup>(43-45)</sup>, and has been shown to produce a three-dimensional representation of maxillofacial structures with an extremely high degree of accuracy<sup>(46-49)</sup>. The use of CBCT allows three-dimensional (3D) measurement of voids and length discrepancies of canal obturation materials. A literature review failed to return any studies utilizing CBCT evaluation of Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> intracanal placement techniques. The aim of this study is to utilize CBCT to evaluate the effectiveness of four different intracanal Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> placement techniques.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Simulated curved canals were designed according to the following specifications: 13.5 mm canal length<sup>(50)</sup>, with a 26° angle of curvature and 8.5 mm radius of curvature<sup>(51)</sup>. The canal diameter at the orifice was 0.8 mm, decreasing with a continuous 0.04 mm taper to a diameter of 0.3 mm located 1 mm from the canal exit. Beginning 0.524 mm from the canal exit, the diameter gradually increased to a final diameter of 0.502 mm at the patent canal exit<sup>(52)</sup>. Using a Form 2 stereolithography 3D printer and High Temp Resin (Formlabs, Somerville, MA), the simulated canals were 3D printed in poly lactic acid blocks with the canal orifice at the top of the block and the patent apex exiting the lateral side.

Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> powder and saline were combined in a 1 g:1 mL ratio and vacuum mixed to a paste consistency<sup>(53)</sup>. Four Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> placement techniques were evaluated: Lentulo spiral (LS; Dentsply Sirona, Ballaigues, Switzerland), direct injection (DI), hand file (HF), and EndoActivator (EA; Dentsply Sirona). In the LS group, excess Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> was placed at the orifice, and a size RA 001 Lentulo spiral was rotated at 15,000 rpm<sup>(38)</sup> and introduced into the canal as apically as possible due to curvature<sup>(30)</sup>. This process was repeated three times. In the DI group, a 29 gauge NaviTip syringe (Ultradent, West Jordan, UT) was inserted into the canal 1mm short of working length and Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> was gently expressed<sup>(30)</sup>. In the HF group, a size 25 Flex-O file (Dentsply Sirona) with a rubber stopper was measured to 12.5 mm, loaded with excess Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub>, inserted to working length, and rotated counterclockwise<sup>(30)</sup>. This procedure was repeated three times. In the EA group, the hand file technique was initially utilized to place Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub>, followed by the EndoActivator with a medium (#25/0.04) tip inserted to a distance 2 mm

short of working length and activated at 6,000 cycles per minute for 20 seconds<sup>(42)</sup>. This process was repeated three times.

All procedures were performed by a single operator that was not involved in the design of the simulated canals. The provider was allowed to view a periapical radiograph of the canal, and was given a working length measurement of 12.5 mm. Litmus paper was attached over the apical foramen to detect any apical extrusion of calcium hydroxide. Blocks were masked with electrical tape to prevent direct visualization of the canal system during the procedures<sup>(53)</sup>. After placement of Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> using the various techniques, a CS 9300 (Carestream Dental, Atlanta, GA) CBCT was used to acquire a 5 x 5 cm small volume scan with a 90  $\mu\text{m}^3$  voxel size. The exposure settings were 80 kV and 5 mA for 19.96 s.

The image volumes were viewed with Invivo 5 3D imaging software (Anatomage, San Jose, CA). Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> placement techniques were evaluated by three criteria: extent of apical fill, amount of voids, and incidence of apical extrusion. To calculate the extent of apical fill, the distance between the most apical extent of Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> and the canal exit was measured on the CBCT scan, and this number was subtracted from the total canal length of 13.5 mm. To evaluate the amount of voids, the image volume was viewed slice-by-slice in the coronal plane, using the free-form area measuring tool to calculate the area of each void. The void areas were multiplied by the volume slice thickness (0.09 mm) and summed to obtain a total void volume for each fill<sup>(54)</sup>. To evaluate the incidence of apical extrusion, the litmus paper was inspected under a light microscope to determine if any alkaline color change was present.

Statistical analysis of data was performed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Post-hoc comparisons of groups were performed using Tukey's Honest Significant Difference test.

### III. RESULTS

Apical extent of fill data is shown in Figure 1. EA exhibited the greatest extent of apical fill, completely filling the entire canal every time (mean: 13.5 mm). Because of the lack of variability in the EA data, this group was excluded from statistical analysis of extent of apical fill. ANOVA revealed no significant difference between the remaining three groups ( $P = .06$ ).

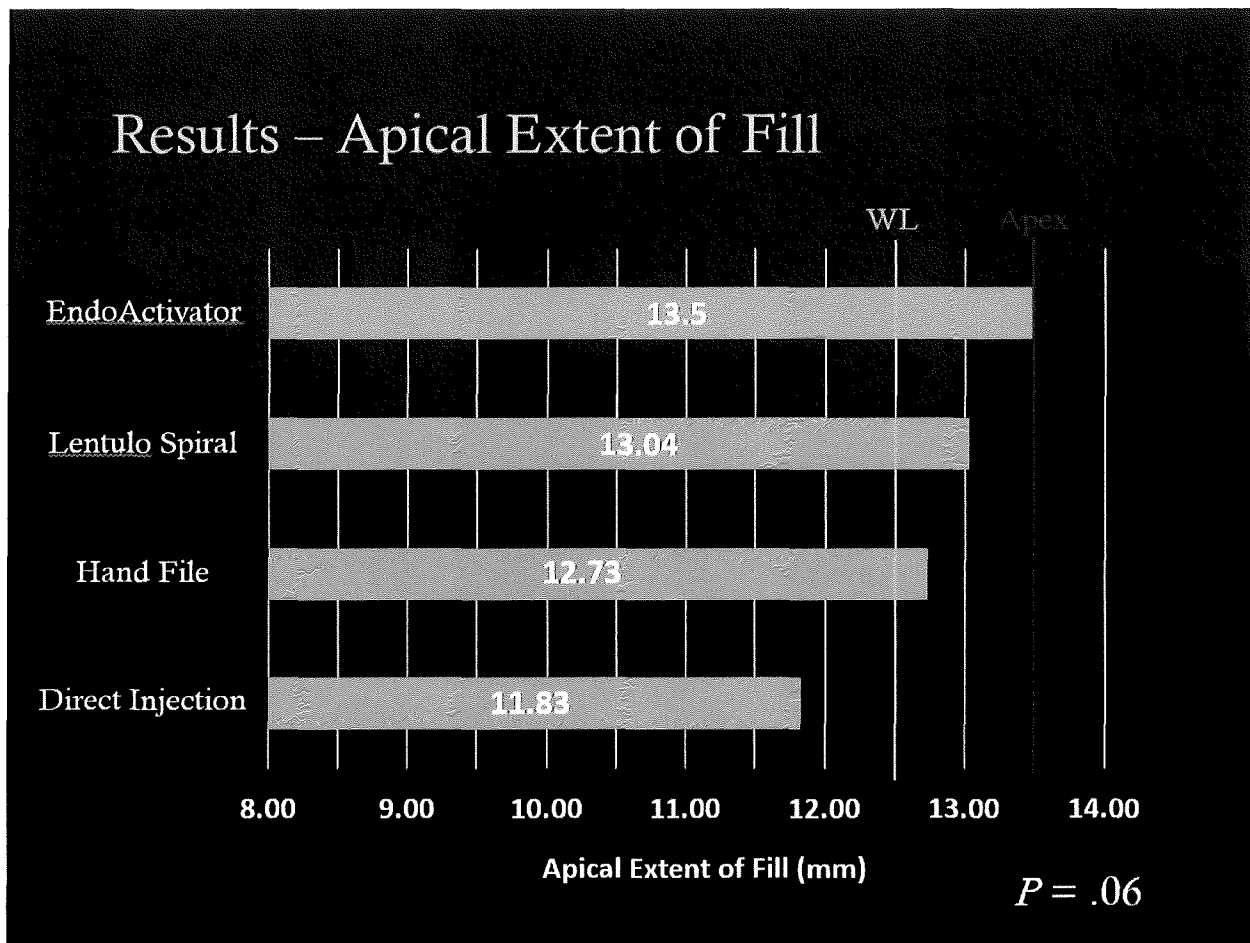


Figure 1

Data concerning the amount of voids is shown in Figure 2. EA produced the lowest total void volume (mean: 0.76 mm<sup>3</sup>), followed by DI (mean: 0.96 mm<sup>3</sup>), HF (mean: 1.97 mm<sup>3</sup>), and LS (mean: 2.19 mm<sup>3</sup>). ANOVA revealed significant differences between the 4 groups ( $P <$

.001). Post hoc comparisons of EA to LS ( $P = < .001$ ) and HF ( $P = < .001$ ) were statistically significant, as were DI to LS ( $P = < .001$ ) and HF ( $P = .002$ ). EA and DI were statistically equivalent ( $P = .878$ ), as were HF and LS ( $P = .842$ ).

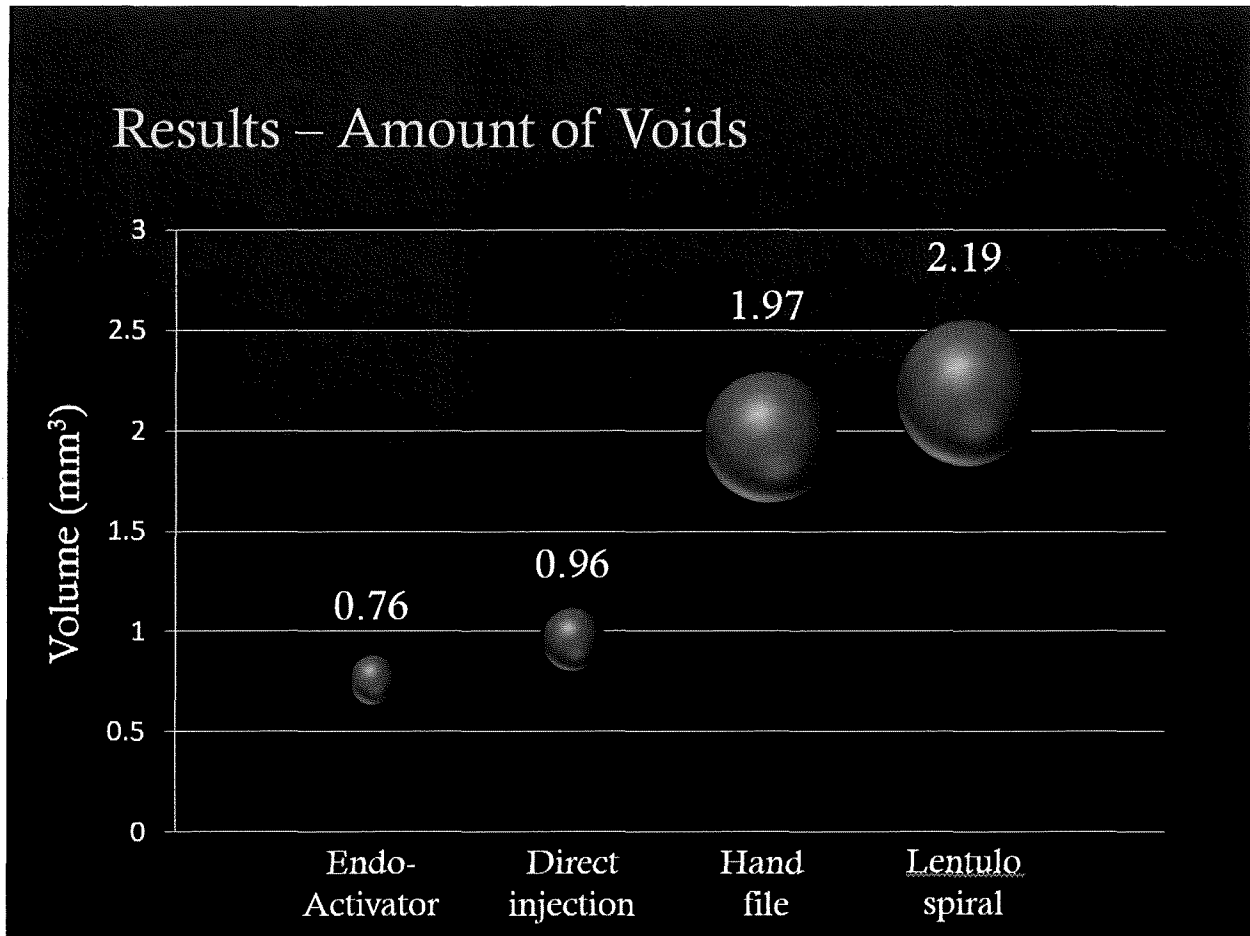


Figure 2

The incidence of extrusion data is shown in Figure 3. Extrusion incidence was highest in the EA group, with occurrence in 13 of 15 samples. DI and HF groups both had extrusion in 4 of 15 samples. The LS group had the lowest incidence of extrusion in 3 of 15 samples.

## Results – Incidence of Apical Extrusion

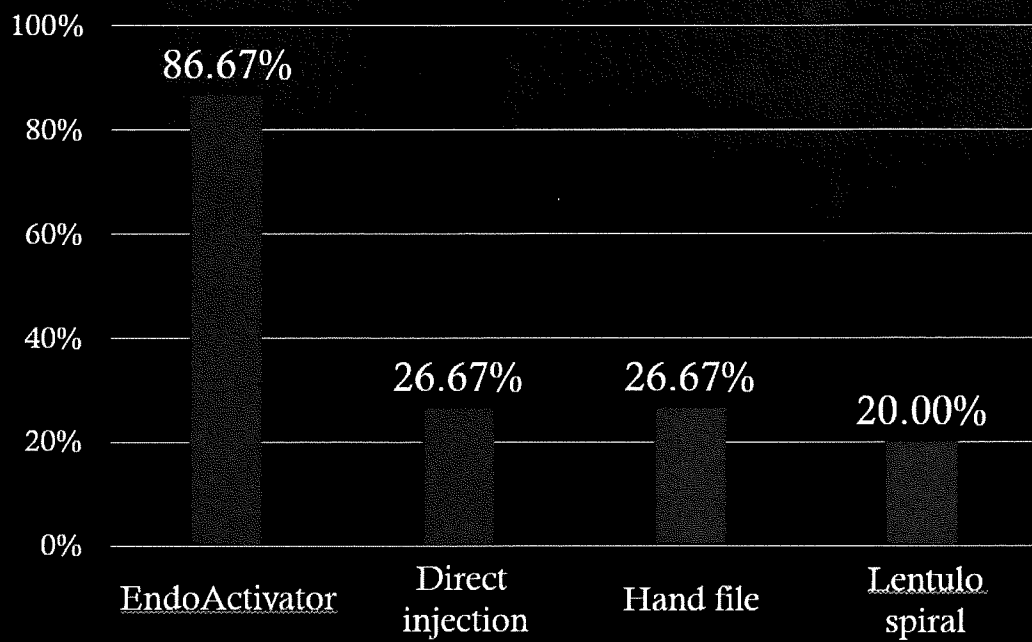


Figure 3

#### IV. DISCUSSION

When placing  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ , many providers today use a pre-mixed paste in a propylene glycol or cellulose medium, which provides different flow characteristics. It has been demonstrated that  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  in a glycerin medium produced superior fills in the apical third when compared with a sterile water medium<sup>(53)</sup>. This study utilized  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  powder and sterile saline in a 1 g:1 mL ratio vacuum mixed to a creamy, homogenous consistency. Pre-mixed  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  pastes could not be used in this study because they contain barium sulfate radiopacifier, which produces CBCT artifacts that could obscure void and length measurements. In the DI group,  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  powder repeatedly clogged inside the 29 gauge NaviTip syringe. The difficulties experienced with this placement technique likely explains why this group demonstrated the shortest fill lengths. The direct injection technique may have produced better results with a larger gauge syringe, or with a propylene glycol medium instead of saline.

The standardized canal designed for this study simulated the dimensions and average curvature<sup>(51)</sup> of a second mesiobuccal canal of a maxillary first molar instrumented to a 30/.04 preparation size. The 13.5 mm length of the canal was based on average lengths of the maxillary first molar mesiobuccal root<sup>(50)</sup>, and this length served as the maximum value for extent of apical fill. The apical terminus of the canals replicated the dimensions measured by Kuttler<sup>(52)</sup>, and was designed to be patent to allow evaluation of each placement technique's propensity for extrusion. The EndoActivator was most prone to extrusion, which occurred in 86.7% of the samples. During placement, the tip was introduced to a depth 2 mm short of the working length, replicating the methodology of the only other study that has evaluated the EndoActivator for  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  placement,

although that study did not evaluate extrusion<sup>(42)</sup>. The manufacturer's instructions for the EndoActivator also recommend using the instrument 2 mm short of working length when activating irrigant solutions. In order to avoid extrusion, this distance may need to be increased if using the EndoActivator to place Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub>. While limited extrusion of Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> may not have an effect on treatment outcomes<sup>(55)</sup>, it is caustic to tissues and can be extremely destructive if extruded into the inferior alveolar canal<sup>(56)</sup>, so extreme caution should be exercised during placement.

Voids have the potential to harbor bacteria and undissolved necrotic tissue which are protected from the direct contact effects of Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub>. The EA group produced the lowest total volume of voids, followed by DI, with no statistical difference between them. The void volumes in the LS and HF groups were greater than double the volumes in the EA and DI groups, and the difference was statistically significant. To account for the differing amounts of Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> present in the canals, the void volumes were divided by apical fill length measurements, giving a value that allowed a more fair comparison between groups; the statistically significant differences of void volumes between groups remained unchanged when accounting for apical fill lengths. These results contradict a previous study which found that the EndoActivator produced significantly more voids than hand files and Lentulo spiral<sup>(42)</sup>.

This *in vitro* model for Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> placement in a simulated curved canal has several limitations. Although the simulated canals are standardized and designed to closely mimic apical anatomy, it is difficult to speculate how the results would translate to an in-vivo clinical situation. Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> extrusion when using the EndoActivator may be reduced when apical tissues and canal contents/debris are present. The results may also

have been different if the mixture utilized a glycerin or propylene glycol medium, especially in the case of the direct injection technique. This possibility should be evaluated in a future study.

## V. CONCLUSION

Under the limitations of this *in vitro* model for Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> placement in simulated curved canals, the EndoActivator demonstrated the most dense, three-dimensional fills of the entire canal system with the smallest volume of voids present, but was significantly more prone to extrusion than the other techniques. Of the remaining groups, direct injection produced low void volumes similar to EndoActivator, but with a much lower incidence of extrusion, and may represent the safer choice for Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> placement.

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