Effect of Storage Duration/Solution on Microshear Bond Strength of Composite to Enamel

Gul TOSUN", Yagmur SENER" and Abdulkadir SENGUN"  
"Department of Pediatric Dentistry, Selcuk University, Faculty of Dentistry Campus, Konya, Turkey  
"Department of Operative Dentistry, Selcuk University, Faculty of Dentistry Campus, Konya, Turkey  
Corresponding author, Gul TOSUN; E-mail: gultosun@hotmail.com

Received May 3, 2006 /Accepted October 20, 2006

The aim of this study was to determine the effect of three storage solutions and two storage durations on microshear bond strength ($\mu$SBS) of a resin composite. Sixty non-caries human permanent molars were stored in three storage solutions (0.1% thymol, 10% formalin, and distilled water). Each tooth was separated mesio-distally into two parts. Specimens of the first part were stored for 24 hours, while specimens of the second part were stored for two months in the solutions. After each storage period, the enamel surface was covered with a composite resin in combination with an etch-rinse adhesive system. Specimens were then serially sectioned into sticks of 1 mm$^2$ bond area and subjected to $\mu$SBS test.

There were no statistically significant differences between the two storage periods for each solution ($p>0.05$). The thymol solution group showed lower $\mu$SBS values than those of distilled water for both storage periods ($p<0.05$). As for the formalin group, its $\mu$SBS values were not statistically different from those of distilled water and thymol groups at each storage period ($p>0.05$).

In conclusion, the thymol solution caused the $\mu$SBS of the resin composite to decrease when compared to both formalin and distilled water after 24 hours and two months. However, the $\mu$SBS of the resin composite was not affected by storage duration.

Keywords: Storage solution, Duration, Bond strength

INTRODUCTION

In vitro tests—such as bond strength measurement, microleakage evaluation, and marginal gap measurement—are vital screening tests that serve to predict the clinical behavior of new bonding systems. In a bid to have a more accurate knowledge on the retention capability of bonding sytems in the clinical situation, it usually mandates the evaluation of bond strength to hard dental tissue. In these laboratory studies, the most suitable substrate is freshly extracted human teeth. However, freshly extracted teeth are limited in availability. To meet the required number of tooth specimens for an in vitro study, freshly extracted teeth are typically stored in different solutions during the collection period to prevent dehydration of collected teeth as well as microorganism growth.

As mentioned above, a storage solution should ideally prevent dehydration of teeth as well as fungal and bacterial growth. To date, several storage solutions have been suggested in published literature. For example, glutaraldehyde, formalin, thymol, and sodium hypochlorite—as disinfectant solutions—are commonly used as storage media. However, sodium hypochlorite and glutaraldehyde were found to be less effective than formalin for disinfecting extracted teeth. Furthermore, sodium hypochlorite has some serious disadvantages such as discoloration and toxicity. Formalin solution, on the other hand, is not only effective in preventing spore growth, but that it is also cheap and simple to use—thus making it an apt choice for routine use in preclinical courses, exercises and research purposes. Thymol also has antibacterial properties, and it is commonly used as a storage solution in adhesion studies.

Studies on the effects of storage solution and duration on bond strength are generally conducted using dentin as the substrate. As a result, only a few studies on adhesion to enamel are available in published literature. However, enamel adhesion is one of the important factors that determines the success or failure of restorative materials. Apart from the factor of tooth substrate, storage solution and duration may also influence bonding to teeth.

The objective of this study, therefore, was to determine the effects of these storage solutions (0.1% thymol, 10% formalin, and distilled water) and storage duration (24 hours and two months) on the microshear bond strength ($\mu$SBS) of a resin composite to enamel when applied with an etch-and-rinse bonding agent. The null hypothesis tested was that both storage solution and duration would affect the bond strength of the adhesive system.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Specimen preparation
Sixty non-caries, extracted, fully erupted human third permanent molars were used in this study. Immediately after extraction, the roots of teeth were removed from the crown at approximately 2 mm
below the cementoenamel junction. The teeth were cleaned with wet laboratory pumice and washed with running tap water. Each tooth was separated mesiodistally into two parts by using a low-speed diamond saw under water cooling (Isomet, Buehler Ltd., Lake Bluff, IL, USA). Specimens of the first part were stored for 24 hours, and those of the second part were stored for two months in the storage solutions at room temperature. The samples were stored in one of the storage solutions: 0.1% thymol, 10% formalin, or distilled water.

After each storage period, 36% phosphoric acid was applied for 15 seconds and rinsed with oil-free water for 15 seconds according to manufacturer’s instructions. Bonding resin (Prime&BondNT, Dentsply/De Trey, Konstanz, Germany) was applied to the etched surface and light-cured for 20 seconds by a conventional quartz-tungsten-halogen light unit (Hilux 350, Benlioglu, Ankara). A hybrid composite (Spectrum TPH, Dentsply/De Trey, Konstanz, Germany) was built up to smooth enamel on the middle part of buccal or lingual surface of the teeth using an incremental technique to a height of 2-3 mm. Each increment was polymerized for 40 seconds using the conventional quartz-tungsten-halogen light unit (Hilux 350, Benlioglu, Ankara). All specimens were immersed in their respective storage solutions for 24 hours.

The specimens were longitudinally sectioned in both ‘x’ and ‘y’ directions to obtain sticks with a cross-sectional area of approximately 1 mm² by using a low-speed diamond saw under water cooling (Isomet, Buehler Ltd., Lake Bluff, IL, USA). The cross-sectional area was measured using a digital caliper (Mitutoyo, Tokuya, Japan). Sections cut longitudinally with an ‘I’ shape were obtained, where the upper half consisted of composite and the lower half consisted of enamel from each tooth. Twenty sticks were randomly selected for each group.

**Bond strength test**

For SBS measurement, samples were mechanically fixed to a testing machine (Harvard Apparatus Co. Inc., Dover, Mass., USA) using a special apparatus²² (Fig. 1). Shear force was applied to the composite-enamel attachment line at a crosshead speed of 1 mm/min until failure occurred. Bond strength values were calculated in MPa.

**SEM observation**

After the SBS test, the fractures surfaces were observed using a scanning electron microscope (SEM). The specimens were dried in an air chamber, and then the fracture surfaces gold sputter-coated and observed using an SEM (JSM-5600, JEOL, Tokyo, Japan).

Failure modes were classified as adhesive failure between enamel and resin, adhesive failure between resin and composite, cohesive enamel failure, or cohesive composite failure²¹.

Fracture surface was photographed under 100 magnification. Specific regions requiring detailed inspection were further examined with 500 magnification.

**Statistical analysis**

Data were tested by two-way ANOVA, whereby the parameters were storage solution and time. After obtaining significant differences, the SBS values between storage solution and storage time were analyzed by one-way ANOVA and post hoc Tukey’s HSD test. Failure modes were compared using Kruskall-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests. Confidence level of 95% was set for all statistical evaluations.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 shows the mean SBS values (MPa) of 0.1% thymol, 10% formalin, and distilled water groups for two storage periods. There were no statistical differences between the two storage periods for each storage solution (p>0.05).

Specimens stored in thymol solution showed lower SBS values than those of distilled water group (p<0.05). The mean SBS values of the formalin group for both storage periods were between thymol and distilled water groups with no statistical differences (p>0.05).

Failure modes for each group are shown in Table 2. Statistical analysis indicated that there were significant differences between the failure modes of storage solutions (p<0.05). The majority of failures for formalin and distilled water groups were of adhesive type. In the thymol group, most of the failures appeared to be of cohesive type.

Figures 2-4 show the SEM images of the fracture
Effect of storage duration/solution on bond strength

Fig. 2 A: SEM micrograph of distilled water group with adhesive failure (×100); B: Fracture surface of enamel and etched enamel pattern after adhesive-enamel failure (×500); Adh-E: Adhesive-enamel interface.

Fig. 3 A: SEM micrograph of formalin group with adhesive failure (×100); B: Fracture surface of enamel and adhesive-enamel failure (×500); Adh-E: Adhesive-enamel interface.

Fig. 4 A: SEM micrograph of thymol group with cohesive composite fracture (×100); B: Fracture surface of composite material (×500); Com: composite.
surface of all groups. Figure 2A shows a specimen of the distilled water group. Figure 2B is a higher-magnification view of the asterisk area in Fig. 2A, and which shows adhesive failure.

Figure 3A is a view of the fracture surface of formalin group. Figure 3B is a higher-magnification view of the asterisk area in Fig. 3A, and which shows adhesive failure.

Figure 4A shows the fracture surface of thymol group after the SBS test. Figure 4B is a higher-magnification view of the asterisk area in Fig. 4A, and which shows cohesive failure in the composite.

**DISCUSSION**

Bond strength measurement in the laboratory is one of the proven, effective methods in characterizing commercial restorative materials. However, an essential prerequisite in achieving consistent results for bond strength studies is that the tooth specimens used must be stored after extraction. At this juncture, it should be highlighted that detractors of conventional shear bond strength tests claimed that for contemporary adhesives with improved bonding efficacy, the eccentric stress distribution often resulted in cohesive failure within the tooth substrates. To address this concern, microtensile bond test was designed and developed to permit evaluation of bond strength between an adhesive material and a small region of dental tissue. As specimens used in the microtensile test are prepared with a minimal surface area (ca. 1 mm²), it will theoretically produce a more uniform distribution of stress to the adhesion substrate - which means that there should be fewer cohesive failures than found with conventional testing.

Microshear test is a modification of the microtensile test. This testing method also uses small surface areas like in a microtensile test, and which generally shows adhesive failures at the bonded interface. In the present study which used the microshear bond strength test method, cross-sectional surface area of specimens was prepared at about 1 mm² and most of the specimens showed adhesive failure, except for the thymol group (Figs. 2-4).

Although cohesive failure occurred predominantly in the thymol group (Table 2), the SBS values of thymol group were lower than those of distilled water and formalin groups for both storage periods (Table 1). While some reports suggested that cohesive resin fracture was indicative of higher bond strength, other reports indicated that there was no correlation between cohesive resin fracture and bond strength. For example, Almuammar et al. suggested that there was no direct relationship between fracture mode and shear bond strength value. Further, Hosoya et al. found that cohesive resin fractures were easily caused by the lower physical properties of the composite resin such as lower compressive and bending strengths. As for our results, they could be explained by the findings of Fujisawa and Kadomo, whereby phenolic compounds such as thymol were found to inhibit the polymerization of methyl methacrylate by reacting with free radicals. Due to the inhibited polymerization of methyl methacrylate, it caused the thymol group to exhibit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>24 hours</th>
<th>2 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thymol</td>
<td>7.35 ± 2.28</td>
<td>8.08 ± 1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalin</td>
<td>8.48 ± 2.38</td>
<td>9.25 ± 1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distilled water</td>
<td>9.24 ± 2.56</td>
<td>9.70 ± 2.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p Means having same letters were not statistically different (p>0.05).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>24 hours</th>
<th>2 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thymol</td>
<td>Adhesive (%)</td>
<td>Cohesive (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 (40)</td>
<td>12 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalin</td>
<td>15 (75)</td>
<td>5 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distilled water</td>
<td>16 (80)</td>
<td>4 (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p Means having same letters were not statistically different (p>0.05).
lower bond strength as well as for the composite resin to fracture easily (Fig. 4). Indeed, the SEM image confirmed that the failure type of thymol group was cohesive composite failure.

Dentin has a relatively high organic content as compared with enamel. In this connection, questions have been raised concerning how the changes within dentin after extraction may influence adhesion in in vitro dentin bonding studies6. Titley et al.9 stated that post-mortem changes could occur in dentin, which in turn could affect the outcome of shear bond strength tests. They therefore suggested that fresh teeth are required for achieving the highest possible shear bond strength of resin to dentin. However, Retief et al.3 showed that although there was a tendency for shear bond strength to increase with prolonged storage, the bond strengths obtained with teeth stored in physiological saline, chloramine, formalin, 0.05% thymol, and 70% ethanol for two days and six months were not significantly different.

For enamel bonding, it was reported that no histological changes were observed in ground tooth sections of enamel that had been stored in distilled water for up to six months10. In the present study,ition on bond strength would most probably differ from that to enamel. With due understanding of how storage solutions would affect the tooth structure, 10% formalin solution - which is routinely used for inorganic substrates - may therefore be an appropriate storage solution for adhesion studies to enamel, since it is the most highly mineralized tissue in the human body.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study sought to investigate the effect of storage solution and duration on bond strength of composite to enamel. To meet this objective, a new bond strength test method was used to determine the shear bond strength values.

It is suggested that freshly extracted teeth are the most suitable substrate for in vitro evaluation of adhesive systems. However, to acquire the sufficient number of tooth specimens, freshly extracted teeth must be collected over time - which means that they must be stored after extraction. Storage solutions are thus used to prevent dehydration of teeth as well as cross-contamination between extracted teeth. Based on the results of this study, we recommended that care should be taken when selecting storage solutions for in vitro studies. This is because the chemical nature of the storing agent may affect the tooth structure and material properties at the tested interface.

REFERENCES

7) Aquilino SA, Williams VD, Sware CW. The effect of storage solutions and mounting media on the bond...