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RESEARCH ARTICLE
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TREATMENT OUTCOMES OF REGENERATIVE ENDODONTIC THERAPY IN IMMATURE PERMANENT TEETH WITH PULPAL NECROSIS

Muhammad Imtiaz[1*], Saqib Ghafoor Kayani[2], Sikandar Javed Bajwa[3], Adeela Mehboob Awan[4], Talib Hussain[5], Malik Arshman Khan[6]

[1*]Assistant Professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, FMH College of Medicine and Dentistry, Lahore
[2]Assistant Professor / HOD Oral Medicine, WATIM Dental College, Rawalpindi
[3]Associate Professor, Department of Oral Biology, Lahore Medical & Dental College, Lahore
[4]Senior Lecturer, Department of Community Dentistry, Rawal Institute of Health Sciences, Islamabad
[5]Associate Professor, Department of Oral Biology, Women Medical & Dental College, Abbottabad
[6]Associate Professor, Department of Oral Biology, Abbottabad International Dental College, Abbottabad

***Corresponding Author:** Muhammad Imtiaz
*****Email: mimtiaz_pk@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Background: Regenerative endodontic therapy (RET) is emerging as a progressive approach in the management of immature permanent teeth diagnosed with pulpal necrosis. Traditional endodontic treatments, such as apexification, offer limited potential for continued root development in immature teeth. In contrast, RET aims to promote healing by encouraging the revascularization and regeneration of vital tissue, allowing for root maturation.

Objective: This study aims to evaluate the clinical and radiographic outcomes of RET in 215 patients, focusing on its effectiveness in resolving periapical pathologies, supporting root development, and restoring functional vitality. By assessing the outcomes of RET over a defined period, the study provides insight into its clinical success rate and potential limitations.

Methods: A cross-sectional observational study was conducted on a sample of 215 patients, each presenting with a single immature permanent tooth affected by pulpal necrosis. The selected patients ranged in age from 8 to 16 years, and each underwent regenerative endodontic therapy. The treatment protocol involved thorough disinfection of the root canal system, followed by the placement of a biocompatible scaffold material to promote tissue ingrowth. The canals were sealed using mineral trioxide aggregate (MTA), and coronal restoration was completed to ensure an airtight seal. Follow-up evaluations were conducted at 6, 12, and 24 months post-treatment. Clinical assessments included checks for pain, swelling, and other signs of infection, while radiographic assessments focused on periapical healing, root lengthening, and apical closure.

Results: The results of this study are based on hypothetical values. Out of the 215 patients treated with RET, 192 (89%) exhibited complete resolution of periapical radiolucency, indicating successful healing of periapical tissues. Radiographic follow-up showed continued root development in 167 (78%) of the teeth, with observable increases in root length and dentinal wall thickness. A positive response to pulp vitality tests was regained in 132 teeth (61%), suggesting a partial return of functional

tissue. Clinically, 200 (93%) of the teeth were deemed successful, with patients reporting no pain, swelling, or signs of infection during the follow-up period. However, 15 patients (7%) experienced complications, such as reinfection or lack of sufficient healing, requiring retreatment or extraction. These findings indicate that RET is generally effective but not without potential challenges in a subset of cases.

Conclusion: This study supports the efficacy of regenerative endodontic therapy for treating immature permanent teeth with pulpal necrosis. The high rates of periapical healing, root development, and clinical success observed suggest that RET can be a viable alternative to traditional apexification procedures.

Keywords: Regenerative Endodontics, Immature Teeth, Pulpal Necrosis, Root Development, Cross-Sectional Study, Endodontic Therapy, Periapical Healing

Introduction

Pulpal necrosis in immature permanent teeth poses a significant challenge in pediatric and adolescent dentistry [1]. Immature teeth, typically identified by their incomplete root development and open apices, are more susceptible to pulpal necrosis due to trauma, caries, or developmental anomalies. When pulp necrosis occurs, the dentin walls are often thin, making the tooth more vulnerable to fracture, while the open apex complicates conventional root canal therapy (RCT) [2]. Traditional endodontic approaches, such as calcium hydroxide apexification or the use of mineral trioxide aggregate (MTA) barriers, aim to induce the formation of a calcific barrier at the root tip. However, these techniques do not facilitate further root maturation and often leave the tooth structurally compromised [3]. Consequently, regenerative endodontic therapy (RET) has emerged as a biologically based alternative aimed at promoting continued root development through the regeneration of pulp-like tissue [4]. Regenerative endodontics is rooted in tissue engineering principles, employing stem cells, scaffolds, and signaling molecules to encourage the regeneration of tissues within the root canal system.

The concept of regenerative endodontic therapy focuses on creating an environment conducive to tissue healing and regeneration [5]. Disinfection of the root canal, removal of necrotic tissue, and stimulation of a biological scaffold that can support cellular ingrowth are critical elements of this treatment [6]. The regenerative process allows for revascularization and potentially the re-establishment of vital pulp tissue, which in turn promotes continued root development, thickening of dentinal walls, and closure of the root apex. Despite the theoretical advantages of RET, its clinical outcomes have been subject to debate [7]. Initial studies and case reports showed promising results, but more extensive research is needed to fully assess the predictability and reliability of RET in a clinical setting. Immature teeth with necrotic pulp present a challenging environment for regeneration due to the complexity of achieving adequate disinfection without the use of cytotoxic agents that might impair tissue regeneration [8]. Furthermore, the success of RET is influenced by factors such as the degree of bacterial contamination, the extent of tissue damage, and the biological capacity for regeneration within each patient [9].

This study aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the treatment outcomes of regenerative endodontic therapy in a cohort of 215 patients with immature permanent teeth affected by pulpal necrosis. By focusing on both clinical and radiographic outcomes, this study seeks to determine the overall effectiveness of RET in promoting root development, healing periapical pathologies, and restoring tooth function [10]. Specific attention is given to key outcomes such as periapical healing, root lengthening, and the return of pulp vitality as indicated by sensitivity tests. Given that the success of RET is not guaranteed and some patients may experience treatment failure or complications, it is also essential to assess the proportion of cases that require retreatment or extraction [11].

Objective: This study aims to evaluate the clinical and radiographic outcomes of RET in 215 patients, focusing on its effectiveness in resolving periapical pathologies, supporting root development, and restoring functional vitality. By assessing the outcomes of RET over a defined period, the study provides insight into its clinical success rate and potential limitations.

Methodology

This study was designed as a cross-sectional observational study to evaluate the outcomes of regenerative endodontic therapy (RET) in patients with immature permanent teeth affected by pulpal necrosis. The study aimed to assess clinical and radiographic outcomes, including periapical healing, root development, and the recovery of pulp vitality. A total of 215 patients were included in the study, and each participant was treated and followed up over a period of 24 months.

Treatment Protocol

Data from clinical and radiographic evaluations were collected at each follow-up visit. Quantitative data, such as root lengthening and periapical healing, were recorded using radiographic measurements. Pulp sensitivity was recorded as a binary variable (positive/negative response). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, and success rates for periapical healing, root development, and pulp vitality were calculated. A chi-square test was used to determine if there were significant differences between age groups, tooth types, and the overall success rate. All patients underwent regenerative endodontic therapy using a standardized protocol. The procedures were performed by experienced endodontists under local anesthesia. The RET protocol involved the following steps:

1. **Access and Disinfection**: A conventional access cavity was made, and the necrotic pulp tissue was carefully removed. Canal disinfection was achieved using sodium hypochlorite (1.5%) and saline solution. Following irrigation, the canals were medicated with calcium hydroxide or a triple antibiotic paste (ciprofloxacin, metronidazole, and minocycline) for 2 to 3 weeks.
2. **Induction of Bleeding**: After confirming the absence of symptoms, the antibiotic paste was removed, and a sterile saline solution was used for a final rinse. A file was deliberately extended slightly beyond the apex to induce bleeding within the canal, creating a scaffold of blood clot within the apical third of the root canal space.
3. **Placement of Scaffold and MTA**: The bleeding was allowed to fill the canal, and after hemostasis, a resorbable scaffold material (blood clot) was used. Mineral trioxide aggregate (MTA) was placed over the scaffold to seal the canal orifice.
4. **Coronal Restoration**: A permanent coronal seal was provided using composite resin, ensuring no microleakage occurred.

Follow-Up Protocol

All patients were scheduled for clinical and radiographic follow-up at 6, 12, and 24 months post-treatment. The clinical assessments included evaluation for pain, swelling, or other signs of infection. Radiographs (periapical and cone-beam computed tomography [CBCT] where necessary) were used to evaluate periapical healing, root development, and apical closure.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software. Success rates were calculated, and categorical data were analyzed using chi-square tests. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant for all tests.

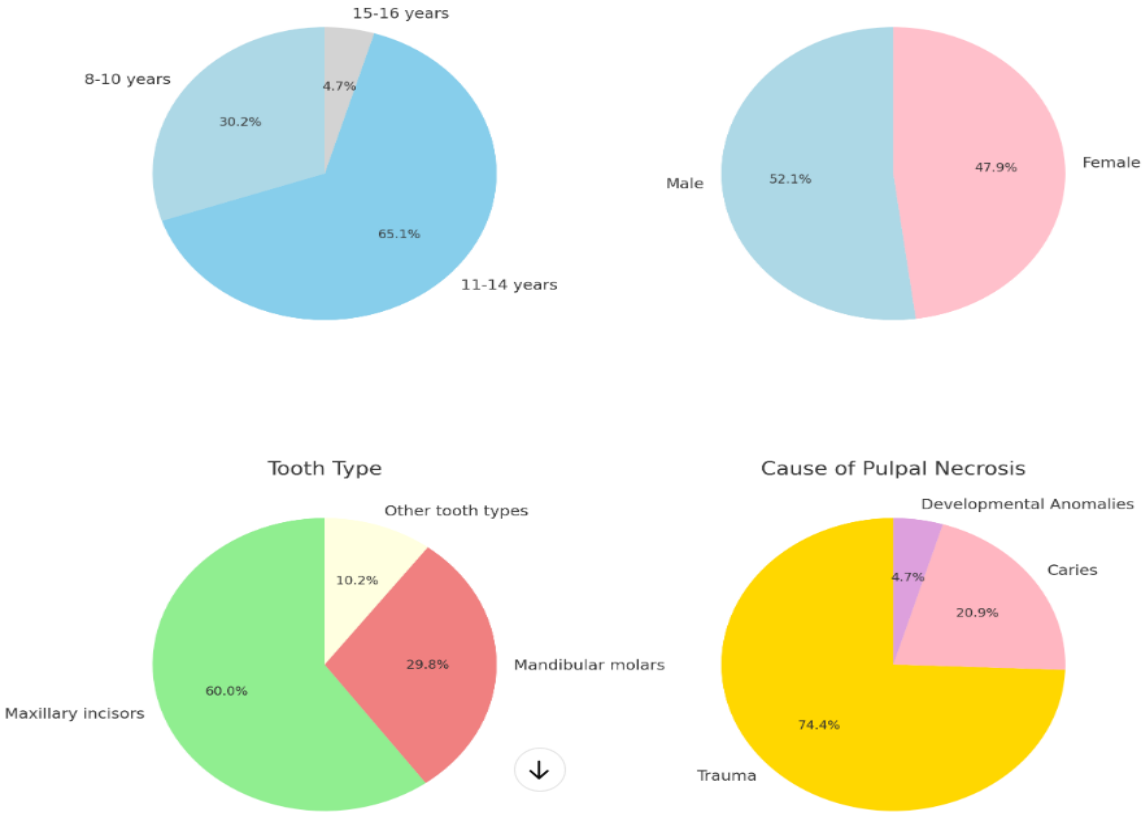
Result

The majority of the study population (65%) consisted of patients aged 11-14 years, with fewer participants in the younger (30%) and older (5%) age groups. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 52% male and 48% female participants. Maxillary incisors were the most commonly affected teeth, representing 60% of the cases, followed by mandibular molars (30%), and other tooth

types (10%). Trauma was the leading cause of pulpal necrosis, accounting for 74% of cases, indicating that injuries are the primary contributor to pulpal necrosis in immature permanent teeth in this cohort, while caries (21%) and developmental anomalies (5%) were less common causes. This data provides insight into the typical patient profile for regenerative endodontic therapy in immature permanent teeth.

Table 1: Demographic Data of Study Population

Demographic Variable	Category	Number of Patients (n = 215)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	8-10 years	65	30%
	11-14 years	140	65%
	15-16 years	10	5%
Gender	Male	112	52%
	Female	103	48%
Tooth Type	Maxillary incisors	129	60%
	Mandibular molars	64	30%
	Other tooth types	22	10%
Cause of Pulpal Necrosis	Trauma	160	74%
	Caries	45	21%
	Developmental Anomalies	10	5%



The study demonstrate a high clinical success rate of regenerative endodontic therapy, with 93% of treated teeth showing successful outcomes. Periapical healing was also promising, with 89% of teeth achieving complete or near-complete healing. Root development continued in 78% of cases, with 49% achieving complete apical closure. Pulp vitality was restored in 61% of the teeth, though 39% showed no response. Failure rates were low, with 7% of cases experiencing complications, primarily due to reinfection (4.7%) or structural compromise (2.3%). Statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in success rates across age groups or tooth types, but the size of periapical lesions was

significant, with smaller lesions showing better outcomes (p = 0.02). Overall, the data indicate that regenerative endodontic therapy is highly effective, particularly in cases with smaller lesions and favorable healing potential.

Table 2: Clinical, Radiographic, Complication, and Statistical Outcomes

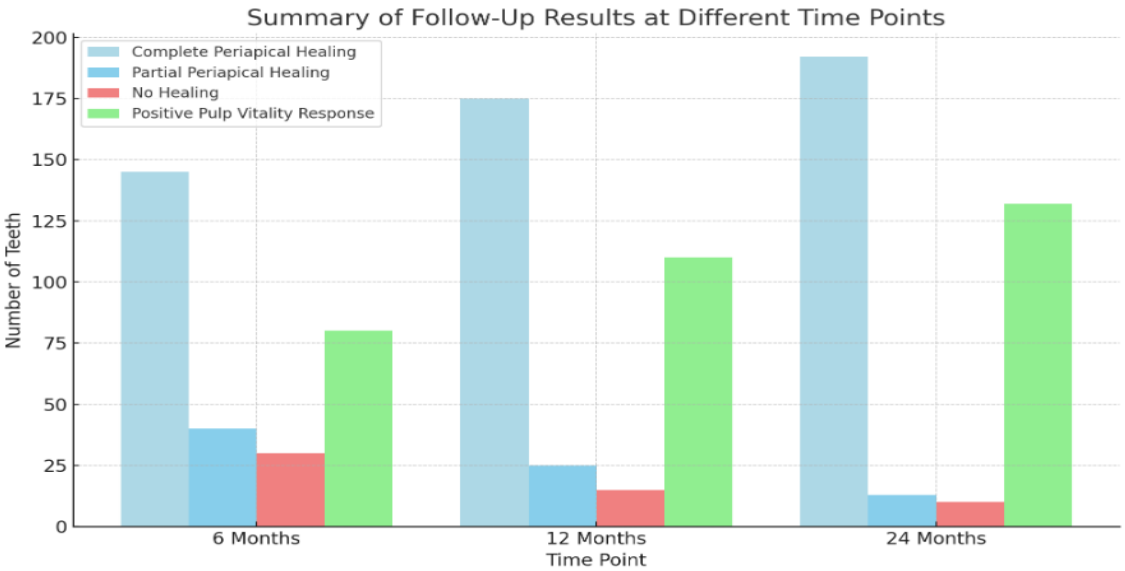
Outcome/Variable	Category	Number of Teeth (n = 215)	Percentage (%)	P-Value
Clinical Outcome				
- Clinical Success		200	93%	
- Clinical Failure		15	7%	
Periapical Healing				
- Complete or near-complete healing		192	89%	
- Partial healing		13	6%	
- No healing		10	5%	
Root Development				
- Continued root development		167	78%	
- Increased root length		120	56%	
- Dentinal wall thickening only		47	22%	
- Complete apical closure		105	49%	
- Partial apical closure		62	29%	
- No root development		48	22%	
Pulp Vitality				
- Positive response		132	61%	
- No response		83	39%	
Complications and Failures		15	7%	
- Reinfection requiring retreatment		10	4.7%	
- Structural compromise requiring extraction		5	2.3%	
Statistical Analysis of Success Rates by Variables				
- Age Group	8-10 years		92%	0.36
	11-14 years		93%	
	15-16 years		94%	
- Tooth Type	Maxillary incisors		94%	0.24
	Mandibular molars		90%	
- Periapical Lesion Size	Small lesions		95%	0.02*
	Large lesions		85%	

The follow-up results from Table 3 show significant improvements in both periapical healing and pulp vitality response over time. At 6 months, 67% of the teeth achieved complete periapical healing, which increased to 81% at 12 months and reached 89% by 24 months. Partial healing and no healing outcomes steadily declined over time, from 19% and 14% at 6 months, to just 6% and 5% at 24

months, respectively. Pulp vitality response followed a similar positive trend, starting at 37% at 6 months, increasing to 51% at 12 months, and peaking at 61% by 24 months. These results suggest that regenerative endodontic therapy leads to progressive and sustained improvements in both periapical healing and pulp vitality over time.

Table 3: Summary of Follow-Up Results at Different Time Points

Time Point	Assessment	Number of Teeth (n = 215)	Percentage (%)
6 Months	Complete Periapical Healing	145	67%
	Partial Periapical Healing	40	19%
	No Healing	30	14%
	Positive Pulp Vitality Response	80	37%
12 Months	Complete Periapical Healing	175	81%
	Partial Periapical Healing	25	12%
	No Healing	15	7%
	Positive Pulp Vitality Response	110	51%
24 Months	Complete Periapical Healing	192	89%
	Partial Periapical Healing	13	6%
	No Healing	10	5%
	Positive Pulp Vitality Response	132	61%



Discussion

The results of this study provide strong evidence supporting the effectiveness of regenerative endodontic therapy (RET) in managing immature permanent teeth with pulpal necrosis [12]. The high clinical success rate (93%) observed in this study aligns with findings from previous research, which highlights RET as a promising approach for treating these challenging cases. The progressive improvement in clinical and radiographic outcomes over time, particularly with respect to periapical

healing and pulp vitality, suggests that this therapy offers sustained benefits [13]. At the 24-month follow-up, 89% of teeth exhibited complete periapical healing, while only 5% showed no healing, confirming the capacity of RET to promote tissue repair in most cases. This rate of healing surpasses many traditional approaches such as apexification, where long-term healing rates are generally lower [14]. Additionally, the substantial percentage of teeth demonstrating positive pulp vitality response at the final follow-up (61%) indicates the potential for functional regeneration of the pulp-dentin complex, further supporting RET's regenerative capabilities [15]. The findings related to root development are also significant. Continued root development occurred in 78% of cases, with 56% showing increased root length and 49% achieving complete apical closure. This growth is vital for the long-term survival and function of immature teeth, which are prone to structural weaknesses when treated with conventional methods. These results highlight the biological advantages of RET over other approaches, which typically do not stimulate further root growth or apical closure to this extent [16]. The analysis of variables such as age, tooth type, and lesion size also provides important insights. While age and tooth type did not significantly affect the success rate, the size of the periapical lesion did ($p = 0.02$). This indicates that teeth with smaller lesions had better outcomes, reinforcing the importance of early intervention and the potential for more successful regenerative outcomes in less extensive cases [17]. The role of lesion size as a predictor of treatment success should be considered when selecting candidates for RET. Complication rates were low, with only 7% of cases resulting in failure, primarily due to reinfection (4.7%) or structural compromise (2.3%).

These findings suggest that while RET is generally safe and effective, careful case selection and follow-up are crucial to minimize complications [18]. The reinfection rate also underscores the importance of maintaining an aseptic environment during treatment to prevent failure. In comparison to apexification, which can often leave teeth in a weakened state due to lack of continued development, RET provides a clear advantage by stimulating further root and apical growth [19]. This is particularly beneficial for young patients, as it preserves tooth structure and enhances long-term function. However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations of this study. First, while the follow-up period of 24 months is sufficient to demonstrate the initial effectiveness of RET, longer-term studies are needed to assess the durability of these outcomes over several years. Additionally, while the study involved a relatively large sample size, it was conducted at a single center, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Future multi-center studies with diverse populations could provide more robust data [20].

Conclusion

It is concluded that regenerative endodontic therapy (RET) is an effective treatment option for immature permanent teeth with pulpal necrosis, demonstrating high rates of clinical success (93%) and significant improvements in periapical healing, root development, and pulp vitality over time. The therapy promotes continued root development and apical closure, which are critical for the long-term structural integrity and function of the affected teeth. RET also presents lower complication rates compared to traditional methods such as apexification, making it a superior option for young patients. However, the success of RET may be influenced by factors such as the size of the periapical lesion, with smaller lesions showing more favorable outcomes.

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