

“Should Endodontists Place Implants? A Survey of K.S.A Endodontists”

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Abstract

Introduction: During the past 30 years, Dental implant therapy has become a common treatment modality for teeth replacement. Dental implants were perceived to help in achieving patients' satisfaction with comfort, function and esthetics. Nowadays, tooth replacement with a dental implant is another option to root canal treatment.

Aim(s) of the Research: The aim of this study is to assess endodontists' opinions regarding whether endodontists should place dental implants or not. Also, whether dental implant placement should be within the scope of endodontic practice or not.

Methods: A 17-item written survey was developed and distributed to a random sample of currently practicing endodontists in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where (N = 80).

The survey assessed endodontists' opinions regarding dental implants. The main dependent variable in this study was whether endodontists believed that implants should be included in an endodontists' scope of practice where; “The opinion like, should endodontists place implants (Yes/No)?” is considered. These following variables were also included: age, gender, institution and year of completion of endodontic training, primary employment situation, geographic location, working hours per week, retirement plans.

Results: The response rate was found to be 86%, and logistic regression analyses were done.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents supported that endodontists should place implants. Regression analyses identified the following variables to be positively associated with endodontists placing implants: graduation from an endodontic training program 10 years ago ($p = 0.002$); interested in placing implants in the future ($p = 0.0001$); the belief that implant placement should be included into the endodontic residency curriculum ($p < .0001$).

Discussion: Implant placement by endodontists is currently a controversial subject. Considering that endodontists should place dental implants is significant because meanwhile, there are only a few endodontic residency programs in K.S.A that include implant training as a part of the program.

Conclusions: The dental implant therapy as a treatment option is now well perceived by many dentists whatever their specialty. Governing bodies of the specialty of endodontics must consider the incorporation of formal dental implant training into the future curricula of endodontics training programs.

Keywords: *endodontics; dental implant; K.S.A*

Introduction

During the past 30 years, Dental implant therapy has become a common treatment modality for teeth replacement. Dental implants were perceived to help in achieving patients' satisfaction with comfort, function and esthetics [1].

When dental implants were introduced, they were placed by oral surgeons as a part of their specialty. However, periodontists began to practice this treatment modality during the mid-1980s. At the early 1990s, the American Academy of Periodontology stated that dental implant placement must be within the scope of periodontal practice [2].

Recently, many dental care providers such as; general dental practitioners, prosthodontists and Endodontists started to learn the skills of implant placement. As a routine, when a patient goes to a dental office with a non-vital tooth or inflamed pulp, all dentists proposed root canal treatment as the best treatment option. In fact, the studies confirm that success rates for endodontically treated teeth are very high [3-5]. Although the success rate is very high, practitioners today prefer or consider extraction and tooth replacement with a dental implant as another option to root canal treatment [6].

Aim(s) of the Research

The aim of this study is to assess endodontists' opinions regarding whether endodontists should place dental implants or not.

The purpose of this study is to assess endodontists' opinions about whether dental implant placement should be within the scope of endodontic practice or not, and to identify the predictor variables associated with these opinions.

Methods

A 17-item written survey was developed and distributed to a random sample of currently practicing endodontists in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where (N = 80).

The survey assessed endodontists' opinions regarding dental implants. The main dependent variable in this study was whether endodontists believed that implants should be included in an endodontists' scope of practice where; “The opinion like, should endodontists place implants (Yes/No)?”. These following variables were also included: age, gender, institution and year of completion of endodontic training, primary employment situation, geographic location, working hours per week, retirement plans, and a number of questions regarding their attitudes about dental implant placement in an endodontic office.

Results

The response rate was found to be 86%, and logistic regression analyses were done.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents supported that endodontists should place implants. Regression analyses identified the following variables to be positively associated with endodontists placing implants: graduation from an endodontic training program 10 years ago ($p = 0.002$); interested in placing implants in the future ($p = 0.0001$); the belief that implant placement should be included into the endodontic residency curriculum ($p < 0.0001$); the belief that general dental practitioners would support endodontists to place implants ($p < 0.0001$); and the desire to continue the rapport with a referred patient by placing an implant if the tooth of the patient is non-restorable ($p < 0.0001$).

Dentist characteristics	Age Mean: 43.2 y	
Gender	Male: 88.8%	Female: 11.2%
Years since graduation from residency	< 10 y 73.8%	> 10 y 26.2%
Endodontic training	Private Uni.: 21.4% Public Uni.: 44.3%	Military: 15 % Hospital-based program 19.3%
Plan to retire in 5 years	Yes: 15.5 %	No: 84.5%
Region of practice	Riyadh: 76.3% Dammam: 5.9%	Jeddah: 10.7% Al-Madinah: 7.14 %
Working Hours/week	Mean: 33.6 hours	
Taught endodontics within the past year	Yes: 28.6%	No: 71.4%

Table 1: Demographic and Practice Characteristics of Responding Endodontists.

Taught endodontics within the past year	Yes: 28.6%	No: 71.4%			
Believe endodontists should place implants	Yes: 57.1%	No: 42.9%			
Currently place implants	Yes: 36.9%	No: 63.1%			
Interested in placing implants in the future	Yes: 80.9%	No: 19.1%			
Believe implants should be part of the endodontic curriculum	Yes: 13.1%	No: 86.9%			
Willing to pursue additional training to learn implant placement	Strongly Agree: 9.5%	Agree: 47.6%	Neutral: 4.8%	Disagree: 35.7%	Strongly Disagree: 2.4%
Believe that general dentists in the community would support endodontists placing implants	Strongly Agree: 0%	Agree: 13.1%	Neutral: 14.3%	Disagree: 55.9%	Strongly Disagree: 16.7%
Would like to continue the rapport they built with a referred patient by placing an implant themselves if they determined that a referred tooth is non-restorable	Strongly Agree: 0%	Agree: 13.1%	Neutral: 25%	Disagree: 61.9%	Strongly Disagree: 0%
Perception of endodontic referral change during the past 10 years	Referrals have increased: 0%	No change in referrals: 90.5%	Referrals have decreased: 9.5%		

Table 2: Endodontists’ Practice and Opinions Regarding Implant Placement.

Discussion

Implant placement by endodontists is currently a controversial subject, but few studies have examined endodontists’ opinions regarding implant placement as a part of their own specialty. This study found that the majority of respondents (57.1%) believed that endodontists should place dental implants. This is significant because meanwhile, there are only a few endodontic residency programs in the country (K.S.A) that include implant training as a part of the program.

If endodontists will place implants, then the governing bodies who specify the endodontic training curriculum should consider reviewing and maybe altering the part of surgical curriculum to include dental implant placement, ensuring that a minimum standard of care is achieved.

Conclusions

The dental implant therapy as a treatment option is now well perceived by many dentists whatever their specialty. The majority of responding endodontists had a belief that dental implant placement should be included within the scope of endodontic practice. Governing bodies of the specialty of endodontics must consider the incorporation of formal dental implant training into the future curricula of endodontics training programs.

Justification for the Research

The survey assess endodontists' opinions regarding dental implants. The main dependent variable in this study is whether endodontists believed that implants should be included in an endodontist's scope of practice.

Informed Consent

Obtained from Practicing Endodontists.

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