Accuracy of vertical bitewing radiography in determination of root length of maxillary primary molars

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Abstract
Introduction: Considering the good geometry and possibility of simultaneous observation of the roots of the maxillary and mandibular molars in vertical bitewing radiography, the present study was conducted to evaluate the accuracy of vertical bitewing radiography in determination of root length of primary maxillary molars.

Material & Methods: One hundred first primary molars and forty second primary molars which were planned to be extracted for reasons other than this study, were used in this cross-sectional study. All radiographs were taken by a radiologist with vertical bitewing technique using XCP pediatric bitewing film holder. The root length was measured from the highest visible point of the occlusal surface to the most apical point of the root using caliper with accuracy of 0.1 mm. After removing the teeth, the length of each root was measured from the highest point at the occlusal surface to the tip of the root. Data were entered into SPSS 20 and analyzed using Pearson correlation and one sample t-test. Significance level was considered as 0.05.

Results: According to the results of one sample t-test, although the root length was estimated slightly higher than the actual size in all cases, the difference was significant only for distobuccal root of the first primary molar (P<0.05). The results of Pearson correlation test showed that in 95% of cases, the true root length values were consistent with those measured by radiography.

Conclusion: Based on the results of this study, except for distobuccal root of first primary molar, the vertical bitewing could precisely determine the root length of primary molars.

Keywords: Bitewing radiography, Tooth root, Molar


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چکیده
مقدمه: با توجه به رویه‌های پزشکی و امکان روت هنزمان ریشه دندان‌های مولری شیری فک بالا و پایین در رادیوگرافی بافت وینگ عمودی، مطالعه حاضر با هدف بررسی دقیقت رادیوگرافی بافت وینگ عمودی در تعیین طول ریشه مولرهای شیری فک بالا انجام شد.
مواد و روش‌ها: در مطالعه مقاطع حاضر از 100 دندان مولر دوم شیری فک بالا و پایین در دانشگاه علوم پزشکی بابل، ایران، 40 دندان مولر دوم شیری فک بالا از دلایل غیر از انجام طرح انجام شد. نمونه‌های دندان‌های مطالعه به روش XCP پرداخته شدند و به شکل اتفاقی در مرکز محیط زیست دندان پزشکی بابل، ایران ثبت گردیدند. داده‌ها با استفاده از نرم‌افزار SPSS 20 آماری قابل ملاحظه در نظر گرفته شد.
یافته‌ها: طبق نتایج آزمون تی-وینگ که در انجام طرح روش را کمی کاهش از انجام داشته باشد. one sample T-test
نتیجه‌گیری: بر اساس نتایج این مطالعه، به جز در مورد روش دستی‌کاری دندان D، رادیوگرافی بافت وینگ عمودی در تعیین طول ریشه مولرهای شیری فک بالا از دقت خوی بخصوص بود.
واژگان کلیدی: رادیوگرافی بافت وینگ، ریشه دندان، مولر...
permanent tooth is an important issue.\(^4\) Planning appropriate treatment for these teeth requires a tool for observation of root and the surrounding tissue along with clinical examination. Radiographs are excellent methods to detect the decays which are not clinically apparent. Therefore, the replacement of carious lesions is postponed until radiological evidence is observed.\(^5\)

Radiography is the most common technique for determining root length and evaluating the structures around the root.\(^6\) Moreover, the complex anatomy of the root canal system in the primary molars makes the determination of location of the apex less precise and the precise measurement of the root length is compromised sometimes due to the presence of permanent tooth buds, periapical pathologies and pathological or physiological root resorption.\(^7,8\) Different studies on accuracy of periapical radiography have shown different results.

In the study of Subramaniam et al. in 2005, there was no significant difference between root length measured by conventional and digital periapical radiography and true root length.\(^9\) In a study conducted by Krishnan et al. in 2012, periapical radiography was able to determine the root length of single-root teeth in a range of 0.5 mm difference with real length (72%).\(^10\)

According to the results of Neena et al. in 2011, both digital and conventional periapical radiography were able to reliably measure the length of the root.\(^11\) Different results were observed in studies which compared bitewings and periapical radiography.\(^12,13\) Considering the better geometry and the possibility of simultaneous observation of the roots of the maxillary and mandibular molars in vertical bitewing radiography, leading to a decrease in the dose of radiation, the present study was conducted to determine the accuracy of vertical bitewing radiography in determining root length of maxillary molars.

**Materials & Methods**

This cross-sectional study was approved by Ethical Committee of Babol University of Medical Sciences (Ethical number: mubabol.rec.1395.236). The patients referred to Pediatric Dentistry Department of Babol University of Medical Sciences were selected based on inclusion criteria and according to clinical conditions, the tooth extraction was planned. In the present study, with coefficient of influence of 1/0 (R) at 95% confidence level with 80% power, 140 samples were determined using G POWER software.

The inclusion criteria were the presence of the maxillary molar teeth that were decided to be extracted for some reasons other than this study (extensive caries, orthodontic reasons, and parents’ unwillingness to save the teeth). The teeth with no visible crown in the radiograph or with fracture during the extraction were excluded from the current study.

In the present study, 140 maxillary molars including 100 first primary molars and 40 second primary molars were extracted and used. All radiographs were taken by a radiologist using the Minray Soredex (Finland) device with Vertical Bitewing Technique by the XCP pediatric bitewing film holder (Dentsply, Rinn Co, USA). In all cases, the KVP of the device was 60 and mA was equal to 7, and the radiation duration varied according to the size of the child. All radiographs were developed using the Air-Techniques PERI-PRO III (Air Techniques, New York, USA) automatic device (figure 1). After taking radiographs, the root length was measured from the highest visible point of the occlusal surface to the most apical point of the root using Beerendonk caliper (Dentaurum, Ispringen, Germany) with the precision of 0.1 mm.

After removing the teeth, the length of each root was measured from the highest point at the occlusal surface to the tip of the root. Finally, the collected data were entered into SPSS 20 and analyzed using statistical tests such as one sample t-test and Pearson correlation. A significant level was considered 0.05.

![Figure 1. Vertical bitewing images of primary molars](image-url)
According to one sample t-test, in all cases, though the root length was estimated slightly more than the true length, this difference was only statistically significant for distobuccal root of first primary molar (P=0.001, table 1, 2).

The results of Pearson correlation test showed that in 95% of the cases, values of the true root length were consistent with the values measured by radiography (table 3).

Table 1. Difference of radiographic and true root size of first primary molars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root type Measurement</th>
<th>Mesiobuccal Radiography</th>
<th>Distobuccal Radiography</th>
<th>Palatal Radiography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Root type</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum (mm)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum (mm)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean±SD</td>
<td>12.34±1.75</td>
<td>12.85±1.94</td>
<td>11.32±1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value*</td>
<td>0.937</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The results of one sample t-test to measure the difference of radiography and true results with the hypothetical fixed value of 0.5

Table 2. Difference of radiographic and true root size of second primary molars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root type Measurement</th>
<th>Mesiobuccal Radiography</th>
<th>Distobuccal Radiography</th>
<th>Palatal Radiography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Root type</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum (mm)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum (mm)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean±SD</td>
<td>11.31±2.09</td>
<td>11.81±2.48</td>
<td>11.45±0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.517</td>
<td>0.232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The results of one sample t-test to measure the difference of radiography and true results with the hypothetical fixed value of 0.5

Table3. Correlation of radiographic and true root size of first and second primary molars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First primary molar</th>
<th>Radiographic Mesiobuccal</th>
<th>True Mesiobuccal R</th>
<th>Radiographic Palatal</th>
<th>True Palatal R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>True</td>
<td>p-value &lt;0.001</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>p-value &lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second primary molar</td>
<td>Radiographic Mesiobuccal</td>
<td>True Mesiobuccal R</td>
<td>Radiographic Palatal</td>
<td>True Palatal R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>True</td>
<td>p-value &lt;0.001</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>p-value &lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on pearson correlation test

Discussion

According to the results of this study, in all cases, the radiography tended to indicate the larger values of root length, but the significant statistical difference was only found for distobuccal root of first primary molars. This difference can be due to the position of this root, angle of the rays in this area and the angle of this root relative to the film. Although various studies have been conducted to suggest the performance of bitewing radiography, most of them have focused on the efficiency of this radiography in diagnosis of dental caries, alveolar bone height and evaluation of bone loss.\textsuperscript{[5,14,15]} To the best of our knowledge there are no studies evaluating the accuracy of bitewing radiography in determination of root and canal length; thus, comparing the results of this study with similar ones was not possible. According to the studies of Basso et al and Topaloglu et al., periapical radiography has had an appropriate accuracy in determination of root length of primary incisors.\textsuperscript{[4,16]} In the study of Wankhade et al., periapical radiography...
was less precise than other methods in determination of root canal length of primary teeth.\textsuperscript{[13]} In the study of Rekabi et al., the root canal length of primary molars measured by radiography was equal to electronic apex locator in 99.3% and in the study of Eskandarian et al. there were no significant differences in determination of root canal length of primary molars using electronic apex locator and periapical radiography.\textsuperscript{[17,18]}

The precise determination of root length of upper primary molars using periapical radiography was not possible in many cases due to the proximity of roots to permanent teeth buds. The presence of physiologic or pathologic root resorption or the presence of periapical pathology makes the measurement even more difficult. Ahmad et al. stated that the accuracy of determination of root canal length of primary anterior teeth was 72% using periapical radiography and Santos Lde et al. expressed that this accuracy was 54.68%.\textsuperscript{[7,19]} In the study of Pinheiro et al., the root canal length measured by radiography was significantly greater than the true length.\textsuperscript{[1]} Considering the absence of similar studies about the accuracy of bitewing radiography in measuring the root canal length of primary molars, it was not possible to compare the results of this study to other studies. Considering the advantages of vertical bitewing radiography such as the ease of process and possibility of simultaneous observation of complete structure of upper and lower primary molars, it is recommended to conduct further studies on this subject.

**Conclusion**

Based on the results of this study, except for distobuccal root of first primary molar, vertical bitewing could precisely determine the root length of primary molars.

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**Authors' Contributions**

The study was designed by Mahtab Hamzeh and Farida Abesi. The study data were collected by Ana Rakhshandehjoo. Analysis and interpretation of data drafting of the manuscript, and critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content were performed by Soraya Khafrī, Mahtab Hamzeh, Farida Abesi and Ana Rakhshandehjoo. Study supervision was conducted by Mahtab Hamzeh and Farida Abesi.

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