

Happy New Year! It may alarm you but even in 2016 some patients may have reservations about the safety of endodontic treatment. Unfortunately, the internet is replete with false claims of diseases being caused by 'root canaled' teeth. This is the focal infection theory and it is largely based on the work of Dr. Weston Price in the 1920's. Many believers herald him as the 'World's Best Dentist' for conducting 'Noble Prize Worthy' research. His methodology was severely flawed, the results spurious, and conclusions fallacious.

In the 1920's, there was little evidence to refute his dubious claims. This led many to promote extraction as a cure for a plethora of conditions. Even healthy teeth were sacrificed in the name of prevention. Fortunately, its lack of success was noticed and the practice eventually fell out of favour. As early as the 1930's the work of Dr. Price was debunked and to this day there is no scientific evidence linking root canal treated teeth and disease. Below are some counter points to the false claims:

- Bacteria are present in the mouth at all times and in all teeth, even those with healthy pulps
- The presence of bacteria does not equate infection; our immune system easily maintains a balance between the useful and deleterious bacteria
- It is true no endodontic treatment will eliminate 100% of the bacteria or soft tissue from a canal system but modern endodontic treatment has a >90% success rate
- Whatever remnants remain will starve and die as they are entombed via a robust obturation and leakage prevented via a bonded restoration and possible crown/ on-lay
- If root canal treatment is not adequate it can be detected clinically and radiographically as long as one consents to annual clinical and radiographic examination
- Only endodontic treatment can eliminate infection and allow retention of a tooth
- Extraction is a surgical procedure and causes significantly more bacteria to enter the bloodstream than non-surgical endodontic treatment
- There is no alternative superior to a natural tooth
- Most people prefer to keep their teeth, but 70% are fearful of root canal treatment
- 90% of patients report they found endodontic treatment to be a positive experience
- Those that have had a root canal treatment are six times more likely to report it as painless compared to those that have not had the procedure

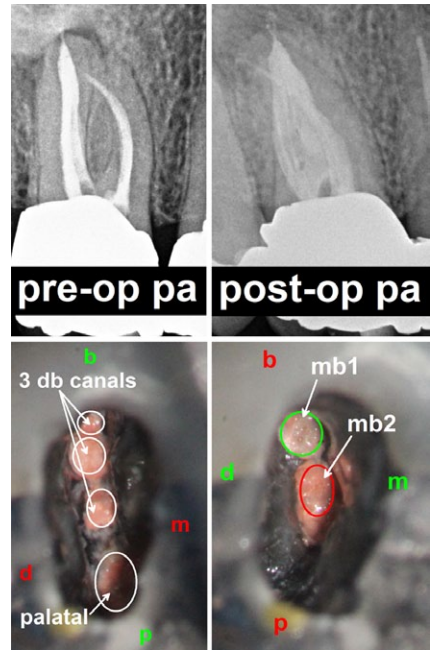
Over the last hundred years our understanding of the cause and proper treatment of disease has developed to such an extent that it is incongruous to ignore. Like all aspects of clinical dentistry endodontic treatment is more predictable and successful, better understood, and safer than it was even a decade ago. The images above are of a recent case that highlights how modern endodontics is more than just putting a round GP cone in a canal.

Not all teeth can be saved but it is a shame if a restorable tooth is extracted because of fearmongering. This newsletter is intended to help you in the battle against the misinformation surrounding infected teeth. I am keen to provide more facts and details about this interesting topic if any of you so require.

Regards,



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HAVE A WONDERFUL 2016!



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