

Nobody wants to be labelled the overzealous, money-grubbing, crown –it-all monarch of BC. In addition, patients have become more inclined to question proposed treatment plans. In many ways, it is less stressful to practice conservatively. This newsletter highlights a particular con of conservative dentistry –the asymptomatic fracture.

The radiograph and pictures are of 79 year-old gentleman in good health with only slightly elevated blood pressure. The radiograph on the right is a recall exam for a 15 microsurgery; the tooth is responding well to the surgery and an implant is planned for the 14 site. While recovering from the 15 surgery, tooth 17 became sensitive to bite. The teeth in quadrant one were re-tested and 17 was found to have a necrotic pulp with symptomatic apical periodontitis. The results from the pre-surgical examination reveal the 17 pulp was non-responsive to cold testing and there was no tenderness to percussion or palpation.

The amalgam restoration on tooth 17 is over twenty years old as is the restoration for tooth 16 (normal pulp and periapical tissue). Upon access a large and deep fracture was found under the mesial box of the amalgam and another fracture under the DO component. The fractures are significant and reduce the prognosis for success. What can be learned from this case?

- Asymptomatic fractures exist; it is reasonable to assume such a fracture could be present under amalgam fillings that are over 15 years old. This is even in the absence of probing defects or other unusual findings (i.e. the pulp may respond normally).
- The most posterior tooth in a quadrant typically receives the greatest occlusal load. After fifty or more years of function it is time to consider prophylactic crowns in the treatment plan.
- The surprisingly large fractures on 17 increase the importance of considering prophylactic crowns for all other molars for this gentleman.

Unlike most newsletters, these recommendations were not gleaned from an exhaustive search of the literature. This is the lowest form of evidence, the clinical experience of a single practitioner -me. However, old amalgams are associated with a higher incidence of fractures. So do not be too conservative; just like a speed trap on the highway by the time we know it is there it is often too late to avoid trouble.

Regards,

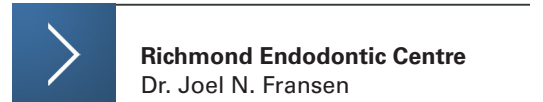
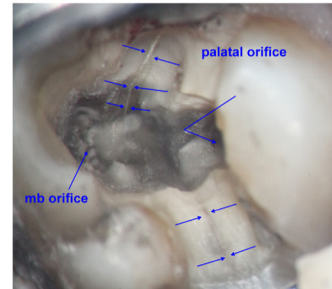
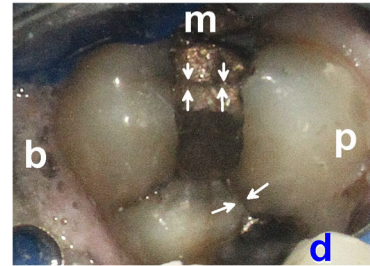
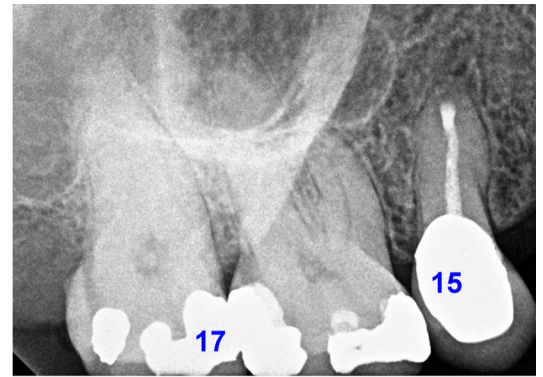


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We are down to just over two weeks (a fortnight) until I partake in the BC Ride to Conquer Cancer. To date I have raised just over three thousand dollars for GI cancer research. *Please consider helping me raise more money and thank you to all of those that have already donated.*

Visit our website to make a donation.
www.endodonticcentre.com



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Extended hours are also available

The Richmond Endodontic Centre Boardroom is open; it is available for meetings, lectures, and study clubs. Please come by and have a look at our new presentation centre!

