Study finds varying disinfection protocols of endodontists & GPs

By DTI

MADRID, Spain: A team of researchers from the department of endodontics at Universidad Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid has conducted a study to determine whether there are differences in the disinfection protocols of endodontists and general dentists.

The scientists found that endodontists are more likely to keep up to date with protocols published in the literature, whereas general dentists rely on protocols learnt during their dental training.

The study authors sent out an invitation to participate in an online survey to 950 dentists affiliated with the Spanish board of dentistry. The survey consisted of nine questions regarding irrigation protocols and other factors related to disinfection during root canal therapy. It was completed and submitted by 238 (25.05 per cent) of those invited, divided equally between general dentists and endodontists.

The researchers found no statistically significant differences in the respondents’ first choice of an irrigant solution: sodium hypochlorite. However, they noted the findings showed that general dentists and endodontists follow different and sometimes inadequate disinfection protocols.

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statistically significant differences in the protocols used by general dentists and by endodontists in relation to various factors. These factors included the concentration of sodium hypochlorite, the use of adjuncts to irrigation, the enlargement of the apical preparation when shaping a necrotic tooth, and the maintenance of apical patency throughout the debridement and shaping procedure.

The study’s findings showed that general dentists and endodontists follow different and sometimes inadequate disinfection protocols. “The results of the survey demonstrated that endodontists keep up to date with protocols published in the literature, whereas general dentists use protocols learnt during their dental training. Both groups of clinicians should be aware of the importance of disinfection techniques and their relationship to treatment outcomes,” the researchers stated.

They pointed out that controlling micro-organisms during root canal treatment—especially in cases with necrotic pulp—is essential to improve treatment outcomes. “Clinicians should update their protocols and also consider referring patients to a specialist when their protocols are based on traditional techniques, especially in those cases with necrotic pulp,” they concluded.

The study, titled “Differences in disinfection protocols for root canal treatments between general dentists and endodontists”, was published in the July issue of the Journal of the American Dental Association.