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Bacteroides buccae and related taxa in necrotic root canal infections.

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Fifty-seven adults with apical periodontitis were examined for the presence of nonpigmented *Bacteroides* species in 62 infected root canals. Nonpigmented *Bacteroides* species were found in 35 canals. In four cases two nonpigmented *Bacteroides* species and in one case three nonpigmented *Bacteroides* species were found. Species belonging to the *B. fragilis* group were not isolated. The most frequently isolated species were *B. buccae* (15 strains), *B. oris* (12 strains), and *B. oralis* (7 strains). alpha-Fucosidase, beta-N-acetylglucosaminidase, and beta-xylosidase appeared to be useful in the identification of *B. buccae* and *B. oris*. Corroding *Bacteroides* species were not found; all corroding strains were identified as *Wolinella recta*. The occurrence of nonpigmented *Bacteroides* species was compared with the severity of the periapical infection. A total of 13 *B. buccae* strains were found in acute infections and only 2 strains were found in asymptomatic infections, whereas other nonpigmented *Bacteroides* species were present in acutely infected and asymptomatic teeth with nearly equal frequency. Ultrastructural study of 13 *B. buccae* strains showed that 8 strains had a crystalline proteinaceous surface layer (S-layer) outside the outer membrane, but all 13 strains had areas of crystalline protein throughout in the outer membrane. The results suggest that *B. buccae* may have a specific role in the development of an acute opportunistic infection.

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