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## Bacteria in the apical 5 mm of infected root canals.

Baumgartner JC, Falkler WA Jr

Microbiology Branch, United States Army Institute of Dental Research, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC.

Ten freshly extracted teeth which had carious pulpal exposures and periapical lesions contiguous with the root apex were placed inside an anaerobic chamber and the apical 5 mm of the root canals cultured. In addition to anaerobic incubation, duplicate cultures were incubated aerobically. Fifty strains of bacteria from the 10 root canals were isolated and identified. The most prominent bacteria cultured from the 10 root canals were *Actinomyces*, *Lactobacillus*, black-pigmented *Bacteroides*, *Peptostreptococcus*, nonpigmented *Bacteroides*, *Veillonella*, *Enterococcus faecalis*, *Fusobacterium nucleatum*, and *Streptococcus mutans*. Of the 50 bacterial isolates, 34 (68%) were strict anaerobes. This study demonstrates the presence of predominantly anaerobic bacteria in the apical 5 mm of infected root canals in teeth with carious pulpal exposures and periapical lesions.

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