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 Order this document*Oral Surg Oral Med Oral Pathol* 1994 Oct;78(4):522-530

Taxonomy, ecology, and pathogenicity of the root canal flora.

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The bacteria present in infected root canals include a restricted group of species compared with the total flora of the oral cavity. Conditions exist in the root canal that permit the growth of anaerobic bacteria capable of fermenting amino acids and peptides, whereas bacteria that mainly obtain energy by fermenting carbohydrates are restricted by lack of available nutrients. During the course of infection interrelationships develop between microbial species and population shifts are produced as a result of these interactions. Strong associations between certain species are present. These associations are most likely based on nutritional demands and nutritional relationships. The pathogenicity of the polymicrobial root canal flora is dependent on bacterial synergy.

Publication Types:

- Review
- Review, tutorial

PMID: 7800383, UI: 95098504

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