THE EFFECT OF CASEIN PHOSPHOPEPTIDE TOOTHPASTE VERSUS FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE ON REMINERALIZATION OF PRIMARY TEETH ENAMEL

Veeritta Yimcharoen¹, Praphasri Rirattanapong¹ and Warawan Kiatchallermwong²

¹Department of Pediatric Dentistry, Faculty of Dentistry, Mahidol University, Bangkok; ²Buri Ram Hospital, Buri Ram, Thailand

Abstract. This study evaluated the effect of a CPP-containing toothpaste and compared it with fluoride-containing toothpastes on remineralization of caries-like lesions in primary teeth enamel, using polarized light microscopy. Forty-eight sound primary incisors were coated with nail varnish, leaving two 1x1 mm windows before being placed in a demineralizing solution for 4 days. After demineralization, all the specimens were coated with nail varnish over one window and were randomly assigned to 4 groups (A to D; n = 12). Group A teeth were exposed to distilled water. Group B teeth were exposed to a CPP-containing toothpaste (Hi Herb®). Group C teeth were exposed to a 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste (Smile baby toothgel®). Group D teeth were exposed to a 500 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste (Oralmed® Kid). Polarized light microscopy was used to evaluate lesion depth, before and after a 7-day pH cycle. Lesion depth was measured using a computerized method with the Image-Pro® Plus program. Differences in mean lesion depth within groups and between groups were analyzed using the paired t-test, Kruskal-Wallis test and Mann-Whitney U test at a 95% level of confidence. Mean lesion depths in Groups A, B, C and D significantly increased by 110.1, 36.1, 40.2 and 18.2%, respectively. The mean lesion depths for all the toothpaste groups (B, C and D) were significantly different from the control group (A). Comparisons made among treatment groups showed Group D was significantly different from Groups B and C. All toothpastes were effective for inhibiting progression of carious lesions. However, a 500 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste inhibited lesion progression better than a CPP-containing toothpaste and a 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste.

Keywords: casein phosphopeptide, fluoride, remineralization, toothpaste

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important concepts that has evolved in cariology over the past several decades is demineralization and remineralization of enamel (Casamassimo and Warren, 2005). Early caries can be arrested and the tooth surfaces remineralized through appropriate treatment. It is widely accepted fluoride is one of the most important agents for promoting remineralization, especially with the aid of topical fluorides (Itthagarun et al, 2000; Thaveesangpanich et al, 2005a).
Fluoride-containing toothpaste was introduced in industrialized countries during the late 1960s and is today the most common vehicle delivering fluoride to the oral cavity. Systematic reviews of the effectiveness of fluoride-containing toothpastes have been published. Twetman et al (2003) reviewed 905 studies, of which 54 met the criteria for inclusion in their meta-analysis. They found daily use of fluoride-containing toothpaste provided a decayed, missing and filled surfaces (DMFS) prevention fraction of 25% in young permanent dentition. They found incomplete evidence for effectiveness of fluoride-containing toothpaste on primary dentition.

Fluoride-containing toothpastes are the most widely used method to prevent caries. Fluoride can enhance the process of remineralization when used properly. However, repeated ingestion of fluoride can result in chronic fluoride toxicity, the most common manifestation of which is dental fluorosis (Nowak and Crall, 2005). Dental fluorosis occurs when there is a disruption of the mineralization of tooth enamel while the enamel is forming before tooth eruption (McDonald et al, 2004), especially during late secretion or early maturation of enamel. Milsom and Mitropoulos’s study (1990) indicated fluoride-containing toothpaste was the only major source of fluoride to cause fluorosis. Mascarenhas and Burt (1998) found the fluorosis from swallowing fluoride-containing toothpaste prior to age 6. Hong et al (2006) showed significant positive association between fluorosis prevalence and levels of fluoride intake during the first 3 years.

Due to the potential risk of fluorosis described above, fluoride containing toothpaste should not be used in small children who are unable to expectorate the toothpaste or who are allergic to fluoride. However, fluoride is not the sole agent in remineralization. Remineralization may be achieved by simultaneously supplying calcium and phosphate to the teeth (Torrado et al, 2004).

Reynolds et al (1992) investigated the calcium phosphate salt of casein phosphopeptide (CPP) for anti-caries activity in a rat model. They found at levels of 0.5 to 1%, CPP was as effective at inhibiting caries formation as 500 ppm fluoride.

Dundon et al (1994) compared 0, 250, 500 and 1,000 ppm fluoride and CPP-containing toothpastes. CPP-containing toothpaste was about one-third as effective as 1,000 ppm fluoride at inhibiting the surface-softening of enamel in situ.

Many investigators have studied de/remineralization of enamel lesions in permanent teeth using fluoride-containing toothpaste and non-fluoride-containing toothpaste. However, few investigators have studied primary teeth, and there are no reports of studies of de/remineralization of enamel lesions in primary teeth using CPP-containing toothpaste and fluoride-containing toothpaste.

The purpose of this in vitro study was to evaluate the inhibition of demineralization by CPP-containing toothpaste compare with two concentrations of fluoride-containing children’s toothpaste on primary teeth enamel in vitro.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample selection

Forty-eight human primary incisors were collected from teeth extraction or natural exfoliation. Only teeth with sound enamel were selected to be used in this study.
Toothpaste used

All the toothpaste used is commercially available and ubiquitous in Thailand (Table 1). Toothpaste for each of the treatment groups was prepared as a slurry solution by mixing with 30 ml deionized water (Rirattanapong et al., 2010).

Demineralizing and remineralizing solutions preparation

The demineralizing and remineralizing solutions were prepared using the method of Rirattanapong et al. (2010). Demineralizing solution 1 (D1) was comprised of 2.2 mM CaCl$_2$, 2.2 mM NaH$_2$PO$_4$ and 0.05 M acetic acid at a pH adjusted to 4.4 with 1M KOH. Demineralizing solution 2 (D2) was comprised of the same components as D1, but the pH adjusted to 4.7 with 1M KOH. The remineralizing solution (R) was comprised of 1.5 mM CaCl$_2$, 0.9 mM NaH$_2$PO$_4$, and 0.15 M KCl at a pH adjusted to 7.0 with 1M KOH. The demineralizing and remineralizing solutions were freshly prepared for each cycle and kept in separate plastic containers.

Specimen preparation

Forty-eight intact extracted or naturally exfoliated human primary incisor teeth were stored in 0.01% Thymol solution at room temperature. All the teeth were cleaned of soft tissue debris and inspected for cracks, fluorosis, enamel hypoplasia, white spots/brown spots and tetracycline discoloration. Then, all the teeth were polished with fine pumice to remove organic contaminants and then kept in normal saline until used.

Upon removal from the saline, the teeth were blotted dry with tissue paper and coated with acid resistant nail varnish (Revlon, USA) in two layers, leaving two square windows of approximately 1x1 mm on the buccal surface. The root apices were sealed with sticky wax. The teeth were immersed in deionized water until used.

Caries-like lesion formation

Each tooth was immersed in 3 ml demineralizing solution (D1) and incubated at 37°C (Sheldon Manufacturing, Model 1545, Oregon, USA) for 4 days to produce carious lesions of 60-100 μm deep (Rirattanapong et al., 2010). Then, the tooth was rinsed in 15 ml deionized water and dried with tissue paper.

Test groups

After artificial caries-like lesion formation, one of two windows in each tooth was randomly assigned to be used as a “before” treatment window and was coated with acid resistant nail varnish (Revlon, USA) in two layers. The forty-eight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active ingredients</th>
<th>Trade name</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casein phosphopeptides</td>
<td>Hi Herb®</td>
<td>Sahaphattanaphiboon Company, Thailand Lot No. 74/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.20% w/w Sodium monofluorophosphate (260 ppm)</td>
<td>Smile baby toothgel®</td>
<td>The Boots Company, England Lot No. 2466708/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.38% w/w Sodium monofluorophosphate (500 ppm)</td>
<td>Oralmed® Kid</td>
<td>Ouiheng Company, Thailand Lot No. 427018/08</td>
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specimens were pooled and randomly assigned to one of four groups, comprised of 12 specimens each group. The specimens were then placed in a self-cured acrylic block and immersed in deionized water until use. A toothpaste slurry was freshly prepared during the pH-cycling process as follows: Group A (control group) was comprised of distilled water; Group B was comprised of a pea-sized (0.32 grams) sample of CPP-containing toothpaste (Hi Herb®); Group C was comprised of a pea-sized (0.32 grams) portion of 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste (Smile baby toothgel®); Group D was comprised of a pea-sized (0.32 grams) portion of 500 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste (Oralmed® Kid).

**pH-cycling process**

The experimental process imitated the changes in pH of the oral environment for 7 days. All specimens were subjected to a pH-cycling procedure. Each cycle involved three hours of demineralization twice daily, with two hours of remineralization in between. A one-minute toothpaste slurry treatment was given before the first demineralizing cycle and before and after the second demineralizing cycle; then, all the specimens were placed in remineralizing solution overnight at 37°C in an incubator shaker (Series 25 Incubator Shaker®, USA) (150 rpm).

**Thin section preparation**

Seven days after completion of the pH cycles, each specimen was removed from the block. All remaining acid-resistant nail varnish was removed with acetone solvent. All specimens were cut longitudinally through the lesion (bucco-lingual axis) using a slow speed diamond saw under a copious water spray (Accutom-50, Struers, Denmark) to create a thin section (approximately 400 μm thick). The thin sections were then ground with wet 800 and 1,000 grit silicon carbide paper. The thickness of each of the thin sections was measured with an electronic digital caliper (Mitutoyo® model CD-6C, Japan). Sections with a thickness of 100-150 μm were used.

**Polarized light microscopic measurement**

The sections were covered with deionized water and photographed using polarizing light microscopy at 10x magnification (Nikon® model eclipse E400 pol, Japan) to evaluate the lesions on each enamel section. The average of three points was used to measure lesion depth. The pictures were then analyzed using Image-Pro® Plus Program (Media Cyber-
Lesion depths were recorded using a single-blind technique.

**Intra-examination reliability**

The microscopic measurements were calibrated. Twenty sections (20% of all sections) were randomly selected and re-examined by the same examiner under the same conditions using the same equipment. Examination reliability was tested using Pearson’s correlation coefficients.

**Statistical analysis**

Means and standard deviations for lesion depths before and after 7 days of pH-cycling were calculated for each group. Mean values for pre-test, post-test and percent change in lesion depth were checked for normal distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S test). Differences between pre-test and post-test lesion depths within the same group were compared using the paired-samples t-test. The Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests were used to test differences between pre-test and post-test lesion depths and percentage change. Significance was set at $p<0.05$ for all statistical tests.

**RESULTS**

Results from the duplicate examination showed good reliability with a Pearson’s correlation coefficient of 0.978.

The mean and standard deviation (SD) for changes in lesion depths after the 7-day pH cycle are shown in Table 2 and Fig 1. The pre-test lesion depths for each group ranged from 86.76 ± 8.29 µm to 90.85 ± 4.39 µm. No significant differences were seen among the tested groups.
(p=0.312) for pre-test lesions. Comparisons between pre-test and post-test lesion depths in all groups were significantly different (p=0.000). The mean lesion depths in Groups A, B, C and D increased by 110.1, 36.1, 40.2 and 18.2%, respectively (Fig 2).

The post-test lesion depth for each group ranged from 103.56 ± 10.40 µm to 182.10 ± 21.25 µm. The results show the post-test mean lesion depths for all the treated groups were significantly different from the control group (Fig 3) (p=0.000). Comparison among the treatment groups showed Group D was significantly different from Groups B and C (p=0.000 and 0.001, respectively).

**DISCUSSION**

In the present study, the pre-test lesion depths did not vary significantly by group. Although caries were produced artificially, there were no major variations among the pre-test teeth.

After the 7-day pH cycle, the mean lesion depths for all the treated groups were significantly different from the control group. All treated groups inhibited demineralization progression of the carious lesions. However, none of the treated groups had remineralization of the carious lesions. This may due to the severity of the demineralization with the pH-cycling model when used with primary teeth. Possible reasons for this are: primary teeth enamel is thin, has a low mineral content, has a high organic content and has variations in the structure of the surface that may influence caries susceptibility (Thaveesangpanich et al, 2005a,b).
A meta-analysis of 70 trials regarding the effectiveness of fluoride-containing toothpaste for preventing dental caries in children found fluoride-containing toothpaste significantly reduces the incidence of caries in the permanent dentition, sufficient to warrant a strong recommendation. However, the review provided little information about the effectiveness on primary dentition (Twetman et al., 2003; Itthagarun et al., 2007). From our study it can be concluded fluoride-containing toothpaste has the ability to reduce lesion depth progression in primary teeth. This study confirms the protective effect of fluoride-containing toothpaste. A similar study by Thaveesangpanich et al. (2005b) found a pea-sized portion of 500 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste inhibited demineralization progression in primary teeth better than non-fluoride toothpaste in vitro in both 7-day and 10-day pH-cycling models.

Itthagarun et al. (2007) found the use of toothpaste containing fluoride at 500 ppm promoted remineralization among primary teeth using an in vitro 7-day pH-cycling model. However, Thaveesangpanich et al. (2005a) found toothpaste containing fluoride at 500 ppm did not result in remineralization, possibly due to small sample size, the aggressiveness of the artificial caries system used, the fluoride content of the enamel specimen used or the calcium composition of the non-fluoride toothpaste control group. Toothpaste manufactured in Korea failed to show remineralization even with varying fluoride levels (Itthagarun et al., 2007). The fluoride content may be insufficient to remineralize some carious lesions or the sample size may have been too small (Itthagarun et al., 2007).

Toothpaste with low fluoride concentrations has been designed primarily to reduce the risk of fluorosis and therefore are intended for use by young children. The fluoride content of toothpaste varies from 250 to 500 ppm (Thaveesangpanich et al., 2005b). Children under 8 years old should consume no more than 0.1 mg of fluoride/kg body weight if an undesirable degree of fluorosis is to be avoided (Levy et al., 1995). Products with low fluoride content are less likely to cause fluorosis and less effective in promoting remineralization. In our study the mean lesion depth in teeth treated with 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste was significantly less than the control group. Therefore, a 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste is more effective than non-fluoride-containing toothpaste.

Comparison for post-test percentage changes in lesions showed the 500 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste group was significantly different from the 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste group and the CPP-containing toothpaste group. The 500 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste group had the lowest post-test mean lesion depth. It appears 500 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste had a better protective effect than 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste and CPP-containing toothpaste. The effect of the 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste was similar to the CPP-containing toothpaste.

The results of our study correspond to those of Damato et al. (1990) who concluded remineralization was significantly higher in the 500 ppm fluoride-containing group than the 250 ppm fluoride-containing group. In our study, higher fluoride concentrations did not produce significant increases in remineralization. Our results are in contrast to those of of Rirattanapong et al. (2010) who found fluoride-containing toothpastes (250, 500 and 1,000 ppm)
resulted in significantly more remineralization than non-fluoride-containing toothpaste; however, no differences in lesion depths occurred among the 250, 500 and 1,000 ppm fluoride-containing toothpastes. This might be due to the different types of fluoride used; in Rirattanapong’s study sodium fluoride with carboxymethylcellulose as stabilizer was used (Rirattanapong et al, 2010), but in our study sodium monofluorophosphate was used with a silica abrasive system.

Fluoride is not the sole cause of remineralization. Another method of remineralization is attained by supplying calcium and phosphate to the teeth (Torrado et al, 2004). CPP have been shown to inhibit enamel demineralization and promote remineralization (Dundon et al, 1994). No investigators have studied remineralization of enamel lesions in primary teeth using CPP-containing toothpaste. A CPP-containing toothpaste had the same efficacy for inhibiting demineralization progression in primary teeth enamel as a 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste. Reynolds et al (1992) reported CPP in toothpaste can significantly inhibiting enamel demineralization, similar to 500 ppm fluoride toothpaste. Dundon et al (1994) found CPP-containing toothpaste had the same efficacy as about one-third the amount of 1,000 ppm fluoride toothpaste at inhibiting surface-softening of enamel. Thus, CPP may be an alternative for fluoride. CPP-containing toothpaste may be used for preventive treatment of caries in children who are allergic or sensitive to fluoride or in small children who are unable to expectorate. Toothpaste containing 260 ppm fluoride should be used in children who are unable to expectorate to reduce risk of fluorosis.

In conclusion, CPP-containing toothpaste, 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste and a 500 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste all had significant efficacy for inhibiting demineralization of carious lesions; 500 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste inhibited lesion progression better than CPP-containing toothpaste and a 260 ppm fluoride-containing toothpaste.

REFERENCES


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