

# Performance of Resin Modified Glass Ionomer Sealer vs. Resin-Based Sealer

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**Abstract:** *the objective of this article is to compare the retention between a resin-modified glass ionomer sealant and resin sealant. In addition, the sealed teeth were compared to unsealed ones in relation to the incidence of dental caries. Material and Methods: Initially, 31 children aged 6-8 years participated in this study. The study children showed caries history, but had at least two healthy first molars. A total of 108 teeth were randomly divided into three groups: Clinpro (n=36), Fluroshield (n=36), and control (n=36). The two sealants were applied under relative isolation after previous prophylaxis and enamel etching with phosphoric acid 38% for 15 seconds. Evaluation of retention was performed by two calibrated examiners. Results: Fluroshield showed significantly greater retention than Clinpro (p=0.002). However, the performance analysis of the success and failure of retention presented no significant difference between the materials (p=0.141). Sealed groups (Clinpro + Fluroshield) showed similar performance in the prevention of dental caries, which was significantly higher than that of control group (p=0.001). Conclusion: Both sealants, Fluroshield and Clinpro were effective in preventing caries lesion within 6 months, although Fluroshield sealant showed better clinical retention.*

**Keywords:** glass ionomer, resin sealer, pit and fissure, caries prevention

## 1. Introduction

It is well established the most susceptible surface for both bacterial proliferation and plaque accumulation is the occlusal surface. This is related to its complicated anatomical features including pits, fossae, grooves, and fissures which act as suitable shelter for cariogenic microorganism [1]. Two factors contribute to increase caries risk of newly erupted teeth. The first is insufficient mechanical cleaning during mastication by the opposing dentition, while the second is the difficulty in tooth brushing [2].

Pit and fissure sealing is one of the most used measures to prevent occlusal caries, since it is a safe, viable, and effective method [3-5]. However, to achieve the best effectiveness, the sealants should be applied at proper time. Also some clinical aspects must be known and fulfilled. These aspects include correct and accurate diagnosis of carious lesion, assessment of the patient caries risk, domain of the application technique, oral hygiene education, and control through periodical follow-up appointments [3].

The most used and studied pit and fissure sealant material is that based on Bis-GMA [6]. With the development and improvement of glass ionomer cements (GIC), many authors have proposed its use as pit and fissure sealant aiming at obtaining further preventive effects due to presence of fluoride inside the composition. Such property is interesting for permanent first molars, especially during the period of eruption [4,7-10].

Many studies comparing resin-based and GIC-based sealants focused on the quality of retention to tooth surface. Thus,

better retention results are expected in Bis-GMA based than in GIC-based materials [11-16]. Although a macroscopic loss of GIC sealant occurs, small portions of the material stays on the fissure bottom releasing fluoride, which perhaps assures protection and prevents caries development even in cases that the sealant seems to disappear clinically [17].

Despite the fact of many studies suggest that the caries preventive effect on pit and fissure of both resin-based and GIC-based sealants is similar [5,14,18-20], more studies are necessary to answer conclusively the equivalency of or difference between these materials [3,21,22]. Other important aspect to be considered is the diversity of materials available to the dentists. However, the equivalence of their clinical behavior is unknown.

Currently, a GIC varnish (Clinpro™ XT Varnish, 3M ESPE, Dental Products, St. Paul, MN, U.S.A.) is used as sealant for partially erupted molars where rubber dam cannot be applied. The manufacturer claims that it does not require rubber dam isolation and can be used under humidity. These conditions are very common during the treatment of the children with partially erupted molars. It also releases fluoride, calcium, and phosphate to the tooth structure.

This longitudinal clinical study aimed to compare the retention and superficial characteristics between a resin-modified glass ionomer based sealant and resin-based sealant. In addition, the teeth sealed were compared to partially erupted first molars (control group) without sealing in relation to the incidence of dental caries

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study was submitted to and approved by the Institutional Review Board regarding to the ethical aspects (faculty of oral and dental medicine, Al-Azhar University, process no. 144/2016). The materials used in this study are listed in table (1).

**Table 1:** The materials used in the study

Material	Category	Composition	Manufacture
Clinpro XT Varnish	Glass ionomer – based sealant	<b>Paste A</b> = Silanized glass powder, silicon-treated silica, 2-hydroxethylmethacrylate, waters, bisphenol A. diglycidyl ether dimethacrylate (BIS-GMA). <b>Liquid B</b> = Copolymer of acrylic and itaconic acid, water, 2-hydroxethylmethacrylate.	3M ESPE, Dental Products, St. Paul, MN, U.S.A.
Fluroshield	Resin-based sealant	Bis-GMA modified urethane, triethylene glycol dimethacrylate, Aluminium and Barium Borosilicate, tetra acrylic ester, phosphoric acid, sodium fluoride, N-Methyl Diethanolamine, and camphorquinone.	Dentsply, Germany.

The initial clinical procedures as well as sealing procedures were performed after the guardians/parents of the children read and signed a clarified written consent.

Healthy children aged between 6 and 8 years, of both genders were selected in public schools. Inclusion criteria comprised the presence of at least two permanent primary molars indicated for sealant, one in each side of the mouth, without clinically or radiographically detectable cavities. After dental prophylaxis with the aid of air/water/sodium bicarbonate jet, the caries index of the child, dmft/DMFT was assessed. Next, the eruption level of each study molar was verified and a bitewing radiograph was taken to help in the diagnosis.

**2.1 Sample Distribution**

Initially, 108 teeth were evaluated and divided into three groups: one control group (CTR – without sealant) and two experimental groups (n=36). Group CLP were sealed with resin-modified glass ionomer cement (Clinpro™ XT Varnish, 3M ESPE, Dental Products, St. Paul, MN, U.S.A.); Group FS were sealed with resin-based material (FluroShield®, Dentsply, Germany); and Group CTR had no sealant. The teeth in Groups CLP and FS were in the same mouth, following a split-mouth design.

This study followed a longitudinal design in which the children and the teeth were randomly selected (Microsoft Excel 2003) for the three groups (CLP, FS, and CRT). Thus, through simple randomization, the child was randomized for either group CRT or “sealed”. Next, the children selected for sealants underwent a new simple randomization to determine which material would be applied (CLP or FS).

**2.2 Clinical sequence of sealant application:**

The sealing procedures of the teeth were performed by a single operator. Thus, after dental prophylaxis, relative isolation with the aid of cotton rolls was executed. Next, the teeth were etched with 38% phosphoric acid for 15 sec, followed by washing and drying, material application with an explorer on all pit and fissures, and light-curing for 20 seconds.

**2.3 Clinical Evaluation**

The clinical evaluations were executed immediately and 6 months after the sealing procedures. Ryge and Snyder’s criteria [23] were adopted to evaluate both the retention and superficial characteristics of the sealants (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Criteria of clinical evaluation

Criteria	Score	Explanation
Marginal deterioration	Alfa	Existent contour continuity
	Bravo	Existent contour discontinuity lesser than 50%
	Charlie	Existent contour discontinuity greater than 50%
Marginal discoloration	Alfa	Lack of discoloration
	Bravo	Margin discoloration
	Charlie	Discoloration under the sealant
Retention	Alfa	Total retention
	Bravo	Partial retention with partial exposure of one fissure without risk of caries
	Charlie	Partial retention with exposure of one or more fissures with risk of caries
	Delta	Complete sealant loss
Superficial texture	Alfa	Smoothness similar to that of enamel
	Bravo	Light roughness
	Charlie	Rough surface
	Delta	Very rough and marked surface
Superficial discoloration	Alfa	Lack of discoloration
	Bravo	Light discoloration
	Charlie	Evident discoloration
	Delta	Rough discoloration

Success of retention performance was those occlusal surfaces with criteria A and B, i.e., not requiring sealant repair. Failure of retention performance was those occlusal scored as C and D, that is, requiring sealant repair. Caries lesion was evaluated by absence or presence of the lesion (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Assessment criteria of caries

Absence	Sound surface. The tooth shows no evidence of treated or untreated caries. Light stains are allowed.
Presence	From initial caries to dentin caries (white spot lesion, enamel caries, caries extending to dentin)

**2.4 Statistical Analysis**

The sealed groups (CLP and FS) were compared through Mann-Whitney test for retention and superficial characteristics. The success/failure on all occlusal surface and presence of caries lesion at 6 months were analyzed by Chi-square test. The level of significance was adapted to 5%.

**3. Results**

The children were evaluated after 6 months. The results of clinical assessment regarding retention, superficial characteristics, and caries lesion presence are described in table (4). Unfortunately, only 28 children of the control group were examined after 6 months. Also 3 children of CLP group and one child of SS group were lost. For retention, Group FS (Fluorshield) exhibited better results than Group CLP (Clinpro) ( $p=0.002$ ). However, for the retention performance (success and failure) the materials were statistically similar ( $p=0.141$ ). For superficial characteristics, Fluorshield (FS) demonstrated better performance than Clinpro (CLP) in relation to marginal deterioration ( $p=0.000$ ), marginal discoloration ( $p=0.008$ ), and superficial discoloration ( $p=0.001$ ). The superficial texture of both materials were statistically similar ( $p=0.071$ ). Concerning to caries incidence, the three groups showed different behaviors in relation to the presence or absence of caries ( $p=0.001$ ): Group CRT (control), without sealant, showed greater caries presence then the group "sealed" with either Fluorshield (FS) or Clinpro (CLP).

**Table 4:** The results of clinical assessments

Criteria	Assessment	Group		
		CLP N (%)	FS N (%)	CTR N (%)
Retention	A	17 (51.5)	31 (88.6)	-
	B	9 (27.3)	1 (2.9)	-
	C	7 (21.2)	3 (8.6)	-
	D	0 (0)	0 (0)	-
Marginal deterioration	A	4 (12.1)	20 (57.1)	-
	B	28 (84.8)	15 (42.9)	-
	C	1 (3)	0 (0)	-
Marginal discoloration	A	20 (60.6)	31 (88.6)	-
	B	12 (36.4)	4 (11.4)	-
	C	1 (3)	0 (0)	-
Superficial texture	A	6 (18,2)	19 (54,3)	-
	B	16 (48,5)	4 (11,4)	-
	C	1 (3)	2 (5,7)	-
	D	10 (30,3)	10 (28,6)	-
Superficial discoloration	A	14 (42,4)	28 (80)	-
	B	15 (45,5)	7 (20)	-
	C	4 (12,1)	0 (0)	-
	D	0 (0)	0 (0)	-
Caries	Presence	1 (3)	1 (2,8)	10 (35,8)
	Absence	32 (97)	34 (97,2)	18 (64,2)

#### 4. Discussion

Studies suggest that the onset and progression of occlusal caries relates to the macromorphology of the occlusal surface [2]. Thus, the incidence of occlusal caries lesion in children and teenagers are still very high [5], justifying the use of pit and fissure sealants as preventive measure [3,5,24,25].

Given that pit and fissure sealants aims at forming a mechanical barrier against the accumulation and maturation of the biofilm [3], the evaluation of the sealant retention on occlusal surface is an important parameter to be assessed. In this present study, total retention of Group FS sealants occurred in 88.6% of the occlusal surfaces, which was significantly greater than that of Group CLP sealants (51.5%). This is higher retention rate of resin-based sealants than that of GIC-based sealants is in agreement with the literature [11-16].

On the other hand, when the performance of success (criteria A+B) and failure (criteria B+C) of retention was evaluated according to the need of repair, no different between the performances of the materials were found. Therefore, after 6 months from application, both materials exhibited satisfactory clinical behavior. One of the factors that might contribute for the good clinical behavior of GIC sealant is the formulation, that is, the presence of resin components that improve the material viscosity and the mechanical and physical properties, thus increasing the retention rate of the material [26]. Moreover, according to the Clinpro manufacturer, the material retention should last 6 months, because this is the mean period between dental appointments. Notwithstanding, the analysis of behavior of this material should be assessed for a longer period to know the mean retention period and verify whether a new application is required.

At the evaluated period, Group FS showed the best superficial characteristics, except for superficial texture (Table 4). Marginal deterioration is related to the contour continuity of the material in relation to the tooth. As time goes by, the reduction of the material continuity is expected because intraoral occlusal forces lead to the natural weariness of the material. At 6 months, we observed the reduction of continuity for both materials, but in Group CLP, a little more than 10% of the sealed teeth showed an intact original contour (Table 4). By comparing the results at 6 months obtained by other author, the resin sealants can maintain the original contour continuity more effectively than GIC sealants [14], which is agreement with the results of this present study.

Concerning to Marginal Discoloration, Group FS showed the lack of discoloration in almost 90% of the sealants versus a little more than 60% for Group CLP (Table 4). Results similar to those of the present study were found by other author [18]. The marginal adaptation of resin-based sealant is better than that of GIC-based sealant because the mean width of the marginal gap is smaller [27]. Thus, the capacity of marginal adaptation would be one of the main factors determining the efficacy and longevity of the sealing material.

Superficial texture was the only superficial characteristic which has no statistically significant difference among different groups, notwithstanding, some studies in the literature report the superiority of resin-based versus GIC-based sealants for this characteristic [14,15].

Eighty percent of the teeth from Group FS showed the sealant with the original color while more than 45% of the teeth from Group CLP exhibited light discoloration (Table 4), results different from other author [18].

The preventive effect of resin-based sealant, due to the retention capacity, is well known in the literature [4]. However, in this present study, although the GIC-based sealant demonstrated smaller retention, the caries incidence was similar to that of resin-based sealant and both groups exhibited significantly lower caries lesion incidence than that of control group, without sealants. This result strengthens the view that even with the superficial loss of GIC, some amount

might stay on the bottom of the fissure, although not macroscopically verified, promoting a residual effect of protection against the development of caries lesion in this area [17]. The rationale behind this fact is that the up taking and releasing of fluoride by GIC inside the mouth could enhance dental enamel remineralization [28]. This property would be especially beneficial for patients at high risk for caries.

The results found in the literature also point out no difference in the caries preventive effect between resin-based and GIC-based sealants. Therefore, both materials seem to be equally adequate for clinical application as pit and fissure sealants [14,18-20]. However, further studies are necessary to answer conclusively the equivalency of or difference between these materials in the prevention of caries on pit and fissures [3,21,22]. Accordingly, the sealing of occlusal surface is one of the options for caries control, mainly in young permanent molars [3] because sealant application reduces caries when compared to teeth not sealed, after 48-month following-up [5].

The following-up period (6 months) is one the limitations of this present study because more effective results out the materials quality and caries prevention require longer follow-up periods. Other important factor is the cost of the GIC-based sealant, which may make impracticable its use in public health.

## 5. Conclusion

Both resin-based and GIC-based sealants were effective in preventing the development of caries lesion, although Fluoroshield showed better clinical retention. However, longer follow-up periods are necessary.

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