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The amount of newly formed bone in sinus grafting procedures depends on tissue depth as well as the type and residual amount of the grafted material

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Abstract

Objectives: Bone replacement substitutes are almost unavoidable in augmentation procedures such as sinus grafting. The objective of the present study was to evaluate the osteoconductive capability of two different scaffold fillers in inducing newly formed bone in this procedure.

Material and Methods: Sinus floor augmentation and implant placement were carried out bilaterally in 12 patients. Bovine bone mineral (BBM) was grafted on one side and β -tricalcium phosphate (β -TCP) on the contralateral side. Both were mixed (1:1 ratio) with autogenous cortical bone chips harvested from the mandible by a scraper. Hard tissue specimen cores were retrieved from the augmented sites (at the previous window area) at 12 months. Decalcified sections were stained with haematoxylineosin and the fraction area of new bone and filler particles was measured. In addition to the effect of the filler on new bone formation, the latter was tested to determine whether it correlated with the tissue depth and residual amount of the grafted material. **Results:** Bone area fraction increased significantly from peripheral to deeper areas at both grafted sites in all cores: from 26.0% to 37.7% at the β -TCP sites and from 33.5% to 53.7% at the BBM-grafted sites. At each depth the amount of new bone in BBM sites was significantly greater than that in TCP sites. However, the average area fraction of grafted material particles was similar in both fillers and all depth levels $(\beta$ -TCP = 27.9–23.2% and BBM = 29.2–22.6%, NS). A significant negative correlation was found between bone area fraction and particle area fraction at the middle (p = 0.009) and deep (p = 0.014) depths in the β -TCP sites, but not at the BBM sites.

Conclusion: At 12 months post-augmentation, the two examined bone fillers, β -TCP and BBM, promoted new bone formation in sinus grafting but the amount of newly formed bone was significantly greater in BBM-grafted sites. However, both exhibited similar residual grafted material area fraction at this healing period. This could imply that BBM possesses better osteoconductive properties.

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Sinus floor augmentation is a highly successful and predictable procedure to increase bone volume for implant placement in the partially to severely atrophic maxilla (Jensen et al. 1998, Misch 1999, ten-Bruggenkate 1999, Olson et al. 2000). Autogenous bone graft, harvested in multiple forms (particles,

strips, or blocks), meets many criteria and is an ideal graft. It harbours osteoinductive and osteoconductive properties, because it contains growth factors and has a scaffold effect for osteogenic transfer. Its immunogenetic competence and rapid healing, uncomparable with any non-autologous source, make autologous source the gold standard for bone re-constructive surgery (Burchardt 1983).

The key to the success of any bone graft is primarily determined by the degree of vascularization. However, rapid re-vascularization and complete resorption of autogenous bone (Davis et al. 1984) may not ultimately serve its long-term goals, especially in certain augmentation cases, e.g., sinus grafting or vertical ridge regeneration procedures. These would require a longlasting active osteoconductive guiding scaffold to support osseointegrated implants in function. The advantages of a combined autologous and nonautologous source, which would serve as an inductive vehicle, and also act as a slow resorbable osteoconductive vehicle, would probably be the graft of choice (Laurencin & Lu 1999, Lynch 1999, Temenoff et al. 1999, Yildirim et al. 2000. Hallman et al. 2001a.b. 2002a, b).

Bovine bone mineral (BBM) (Bio-Oss[®], Geistlich Biomaterials, Wolhusen, Switzerland) is an excellent biocompatible and osteoconductive material (Spector 1994, Jensen et al. 1996, Berglundh & Lindhe 1997, Boyne 1997, Hämmerle et al. 1997, Skoglund et al. 1997, Artzi & Nemcovsky 1998), and has proved to be an appropriate scaffold in ridge deficiencies, periimplant destruction, and sinus augmentation procedures (Smiler et al. 1992, Wetzel et al. 1995, Dies et al. 1996, Hürzeler et al. 1997, Valentini & Abensur 1997, Piattelli et al. 1999, Artzi et al. 2000, 2001a, b, 2002, Hallman et al. 2001b, 2002a). Extensive morphometric data also show that it is highly predictable (Haas et al. 1998, Valentini et al. 1998, Hanisch et al. 1999; Terheyden et al. 1999; Yildirim et al. 2000, Artzi et al. 2001b, 2002, Hallman et al. 2001a, 2002a, b). However, the rate and mechanism of its resorption are still unclear (Berglundh & Lindhe 1997, Skoglund et al. 1997, Schlegel & Donath 1998, Taylor et al. 2002, Artzi et al. 2003a, b, Sartori et al. 2003).

Beta tricalcium phosphate (β -TCP) (Cerasorb[®], Curasan, Kleinostheim, Germany), a ceramic alloplast, is another popular graft material, which has shown promising results (Breitbart

et al. 1995, Gao et al. 1997, Buser et al. 1998, Ohsawa et al. 2000, Szabo et al. 2001). Unlike BBM, this material had shown extensive resorption within 12–84 months (Yamada et al. 1997, Wiltfang et al. 2002, Artzi et al. 2004). This raises the question as to what is the impact of the material resorption rate on the amount of newly formed bone established in the augmented sites.

Therefore, the aim of this study was to evaluate morphometrically the amount of newly formed bone around two different bone grafts, a synthetic (β -TCP) and a natural (BBM) one, and to determine whether there was a correlation between new bone formation and the residual amount of the grafted material particles at 12 months' healing period.

Materials and Methods

The study comprised of 12 bilateral sinus floor augmentation procedures, using a one- or two-stage technique. In the one-stage approach, implants (TiUnite[®] Replace Select Straight, 3.5-4.3 mm, Nobel Biocare, Goteburg, Sweden or MTX[®] Tapered Screwvent or Spline, 3.7-5.0 mm, Centerpulse Dental Inc, Carlesbad, CA, USA) were placed in conjunction with the augmentation procedure, and in the two-stage approach, implant placement occurred at 6 months. However, specimens were retrieved from both procedures at 12 months post-augmentation upon implant cover screw exposure.

The study consisted of 12 patients (seven women, five men), ranging in age from 42 to 64 years (average 50.1 years). Patients disclosed no systemic disorders and no requirement of any routine medication. Each surgical step was explained and patients signed a consent form. The Ethics Committee of the University approved the study.

A panoramic radiograph and a computerized tomography (CT) scan of the maxilla were taken for each patient. Antral spaces were evaluated at 3 mm serial sections. Residual bone height, as measured on the serial sections of the CT scan, ranged between 1 and 7 mm (average 3.8 mm). In five sites (two were bilateral in two patients), where the residual alveolus was 1-2 mm in height, the two-stage technique was used, and implants (n = 15) were placed after 6 months. In 19 sites, where a onestage procedure was used, residual bone height was at least 3 mm. Implants (n = 62) were simultaneously placed with the augmentation material.

In each patient, one side was randomly grafted with a combination (1:1 ratio) of BBM and autogenous bone chips and the contra-lateral side, at 2-week intervals, with a combination of β -TCP and autogenous bone chips (1:1 ratio).

Pre-medication followed the protocol suggested by Misch (1999). That is, Dexamethasone (Rekah Pharmaceuticals, Holon, Israel) 9 mg before surgery, 6 mg after 24 h, and 3 mg after 48 h, as an anti-inflammatory drug. Systemic antibiotics were also administered 1 h before surgery, Amoxicillin (Moxypen[®], Teva Pharmaceuticals, Petach Tikvah, Israel) 1 g and 500 mg (QID) for 1 week. As an analgesic agent, Ibuprufen (Etopan, Taro, Haifa Bay, Israel) 200 mg, two tablets initial dose, and one tablet as needed later, was also prescribed. The sequential surgical steps are well known and follow the pioneering technique of Bovne and James (1980) and Tatum (1986). The technique has been previously described in detail (Nevins & Fiorellini 1998, Jensen 1999, Misch 1999, Artzi et al. 2001b, 2003c, Hallman et al. 2001a).

Autogenous bone chips were collected by cortical scraping of the lateral posterior area of the mandible near the external oblique line using a special manual scraper device (MxGrafter[®], Maxilon Laboratories, Inc., Hollis, NH, USA). At the maxillary antrum, the fractured lateral bony wall was pushed gently inward and upward, along with careful reflection of the Schneiderian membrane. Cortical bone chips were then harvested. After local anaesthesia of the long buccal nerve, a blunt incision was made on the lateral posterior part of the mandible extending from the buccal masticatory mucosa to the ascending ramus with a Bard-Parker No. 15 c blade (Martin GmbH & Co. KG., Tuttlingen, Germany). A full periosteal thickness flap exposed the lateral retromolar mandibular bone area. By using the safe manual bone scraper, numerous bone chips were harvested from the cortical plate. These were mixed at a 1:1 ratio with either BBM $(250-1000 \,\mu\text{m})$ or β -TCP (500-1000 µm), and blood coagulum was added for moisture.

In the immediate implant placement approach, i.e., one-stage, grafted material was applied in increments before



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formic acid for 2 weeks. The decalcified cylindrical specimens were embedded in paraffin and transversely cut into serial sections, 5 µm in width, using a microtome (Leica RM 2245, Leica Microsystems, Nussloch GmbH, Germany). Each core was cut uniformly from the peripheral to deeper region. Morphometric analysis was performed on a pair of sections (25 µm apart) from each of the peripheral, middle, and deepest regions of each specimen core, stained with haematoxylin-eosin. Data from each pair were averaged and used as such, while a mean of the three examined areas of each sample was also calculated.

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In each section, the area fraction of bone and grafted material particles was measured using an adaptation of the point-counting procedure (Chalkey 1943, Bellhouse 1981, Dayan et al. 1992, Artzi et al. 2000). Briefly, each section was examined in a projection microscope (Visopan, Reichart, Leica AG, Vienna, Austria) at $\times 20$ magnification. A 64-square $(1.5 \text{ cm} \times 1.5 \text{ cm})$ graticule was superimposed on the screen. Point counting was performed on bone and grafted particles (BBM or β -TCP). Whenever the graticule-square centre (marked by a "+") hit one of the two components, the specified component scored one point. The sum of the points overlying each component (Pi) was calculated. Area fraction percentage of each component in each section was determined as $Pi/\Sigma i$, where Σi represents the total number of points superimposed on each section.

The two measured parameters (mean bone area and particle area of the two sections representing each depth) were statistically analysed (SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL, USA). One- and two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tested whether the parameters were influenced by tissue depth and type of filler. Paired t-tests evaluated the difference in both parameters between the two fillers (i.e., two sides of the same patient) at each depth. A correlation analysis (two-tailed Pearson Correlation Coefficients) tested the association between bone and particle area fractions of each material at each depth.

Results

All (n = 77) implants except one showed solid stability and no crestal bone resorption. With the two-stage technique, all surgical sites (n = 15)

Fig. 1. (a) A mix of β -TCP and autogenous bone chips augments the sinus floor and occludes the lateral window orifice. (b) Specimen core taken with trephine at the previous location of the window area, avoiding contact with implants.

and after implant placement. The site was filled with the grafted particles and the obturated window boundaries were measured to the crestal bone level (Fig. 1a). Also, in this technique, the location of the implant body was considered for accurate orientation of the future specimen harvesting phase (Fig. 1b). Prior to soft tissue closure, the entire obturated lateral window was covered by an absorbable double-layer collagen membrane (Bio-Gide[®], Geistlich Biomaterials, Wolhusen, Switzerland).

At the five sites (three grafted with β -TCP and two with BBM) of the twostage approach, implants were placed 6 months post-augmentation. In both techniques, the cover screw was exposed 12 months post-augmentation. A periapical radiograph showed osseous

housing around implants and their exact location before harvesting a sample of the augmented tissue sample. At that time, cylindrical bone samples were harvested by a 2 mm internal diameter trephine bur exactly from the previous location of the lateral fractured window area. Specimen retrieval depth varied from 6 to 8 mm. The current periapical radiograph and previous measurement during the augmentation surgical phase ensured avoidance of hazards and overapproximation of the trephine bur during cautious drilling.

Tissue samples were trimmed to a standard length (6 mm) and marked with black ink to identify the peripheral versus deep ends. Specimens were fixed in 10% neutral buffered formalin for 1 week and then decalcified with 5%

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healed uneventfully and all implants were shown to be osseointegrated, clinically. However, with the one-stage technique (n = 62), one implant (in a β -TCP site) that did not establish initial stability at the time of surgical placement could not integrate and was removed after 1 month. This implant was replaced after 4 months subsequent to complete healing of the site.

Histomorphometrically, bone area fraction in all grafted sites increased from peripheral to deeper zones of the specimen cores (Table 1). Thus, bone area fraction increased from 26% to 37.7% (average 32%; SD = 8.4) at the β -TCP-grafted sites (Figs 2a, b) and from 35.9% to 53.2% (average 45.6%, SD = 10.9) at the BBM-grafted sites (Figs 3a, b). This depth increase was statistically significant for both fillers (p<0.005). At each depth, bone area in BBM sites was significantly greater than that in β -TCP sites (p<0.02, p<0.001 and p<0.002 at peripheral, middle and deep zones, respectively). Two-way

Table 1. Bone area fraction (%) in the different grafted sites (mean \pm SD)

Depth	β -TCP	BBM	Paired <i>t</i> -test
Peripheral	26.0 ± 4.7	35.9 ± 9.4	p = 0.017
Middle	32.1 ± 5.5	47.8 ± 8.4	p < 0.001
Deep	37.7 ± 9.9	53.2 ± 6.9	p = 0.002
Average	32.0 ± 8.4	45.6 ± 10.9	-



Fig. 2. (a) Representative section from a β -TCP specimen core, in which material particles (P), newly formed bone (B), and intervening connective tissue (C) are clearly visible (haematoxylin–eosin staining × 60 original magnification). (b) Higher magnification of (a). Vital newly formed bone with osteocytes in the lacunae resides in intimate contact with the grafted material (P) (haematoxylin–eosin staining × 120 original magnification).

ANOVA, which showed that bone area was significantly influenced by depth and filler, corroborated these conclusions.

However, particle area fraction was affected by depth but not by the type of filler. It decreased from 27.9% in peripheral zones to 23.2% in deep zones of β -TCP sites and from 29.2% to 22.6% in BBM sites (Table 2). There was no difference between particle area fractions of the two fillers at any depth.

When correlation coefficients between bone area and particle area at each depth were examined, a significant negative correlation was found in β -TCP sites (R = 0.72 p = 0.009 and R = 0.68 p = 0.014 in deep and middle zones, respectively) but not in BBM sites (Table 3).

Discussion

The two non-autologous bone grafts used in this study, whether a natural derivative (BBM) or a synthetic substitute (β -TCP), proved to be biocompatible and osteoconductive and promoted bone formation. Eventually, both materials enabled regeneration of newly formed bone to accommodate implants for fixed prosthetic reconstruction in the posterior atrophic maxilla.

In this procedure an absorbable GTR membrane was applied to enhance osteopromotion (Ohnishi et al. 2000). A recent comparative study in monkeys (Schou et al. 2003) has shown the advantage of BBM particles in experimental peri-implant sites treated in accordance with GTR principles. The advantage of GTR membrane over lattice at the wound site is well documented (Dahlin et al. 1988, 1989, 1990, Tarnow et al. 2000, Wikesjo et al. 2003), and would facilitate bone formation and absorption of the bone graft material.

Although different resorption rates of TCP and BBM have been reported (Berglundh & Lindhe 1997, Skoglund et al. 1997, Yamada et al. 1997, Schlegel & Donath 1998, Taylor et al. 2002, Wiltfang et al. 2002, Artzi et al. 2003a, b, 2004, Sartori et al. 2003), both showed a similar area fraction of the grafted particles at 12 months in this study. Nevertheless, complete resorption of β -TCP has been reported after a healing period of 24 months (Artzi et al. 2004). Irrespective of particle area fraction at the BBM sites was significantly



Fig. 3. (a) Representative section from a BBM specimen core. Substantial newly formed bone (B) surrounds the grafted material (P), while connective tissue is mainly found in the periphery (haematoxylin–eosin staining \times 60 original magnification). (b) Higher magnification of (a). Newly formed bone with numerous osteocytes completely surrounds the grafted material (P) (haematoxylin–eosin staining \times 120 original magnification).

Table 2. Particles area fraction (%) in the different grafted sites (mean \pm SD)

Depth	β -TCP	BBM	Paired <i>t</i> -test
Peripheral	27.9 ± 4.4	29.2 ± 6.7	NS
Middle	24.6 ± 6.5	26.0 ± 7.8	NS
Deep	23.2 ± 4.9	22.6 ± 6.9	NS
Average	25.3 ± 5.6	26.0 ± 7.5	

NS, statistically not significant, β -TCP, β -tricalcium phosphate; BBM, bovine bone mineral.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients (R) between bone and particle area fractions

0 500	DDI
β-TCP	BBM
0.47	0.25
0.72*	0.46
0.68**	0.15
	β-TCP 0.47 0.72* 0.68**

 β -TCP, β -tricalcium phosphate; BBM, bovine bone mineral. *p = 0.009; **p = 0.014.

greater than at the β -TCP-grafted sites. This could indicate the degree of osteoconductivity of each material. In the same environment, BBM proved to promote a significantly greater amount of new bone formation over β -TCP after 12 months. Despite the slow resorption rate of BBM, it did not inhibit the continual formation of newly formed bone, but progressively enhanced it (Artzi et al. 2003a, b). It can be assumed that the macro- and micro-porous configurations of BBM particles (Spector 1999, Rosen et al. 2002) result in better osteoconductive properties and the continual presence of the material established hard augmented tissue combined by the new bone and the grafted material as a new dense "cancellous network". In a recent study (Xu et al. 2004), BBM, as a grafted material in maxillary sinus in rabbits, contributed to the stability of the augmentation site by inhibiting bone resorption. Therefore, it is not surprising that the presence of residual grafted material at the BBM sites is not commensurate with the amount of newly formed bone, as shown by the Pearson correlation test, while at the β -TCP sites, the grafted material negatively correlated to the amount of new bone at the deeper (middle and deep) augmentation zones. This correlation was not found at the peripheral zone, probably because of the temporarily impaired vascularization and selective barrier function of the double layer collagen membrane at the early healing period that was determinant. The negative correlation between particle and bone area fractions at the β -TCP actually showed that the amount of newly formed bone depended on the resorbable capability of this scaffold. β -TCP, which is also a porous material, but a ceramic synthetic one, acts differently, both chemically and functionally, thus establishing a different bone re-modelling process over time.

The increasing/decreasing pattern along the depth of the augmented site has been shown in sinus grafting procedures (Artzi et al. 2001b, 2002). An undisturbed vascular supply to the grafting site is of utmost importance (Solar et al. 1999). It appears that the amount of new regenerated tissue is not only time dependable (Valentini et al. 2000, Sartori et al. 2003) but also dependent on augmentation location and depth. The recipient osseous site and walls and the proximity of the Schneiderian membrane, as vascular nourishment sources, probably influence the amount of tissue generation.

Conclusion

Both materials tested in this study (β -TCP and BBM) are suitable for promoting bone formation. However, at 12 months, the greater amount of newly formed bone in BBM-grafted sites compared with β -TCP sites, in light of the similar residual material area fraction, suggests that BBM possesses better osteoconductive properties.

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