

COMMENTARY

Nightguard Vital Bleaching: Side Effects and Patient Satisfaction 10 to 17 Years Post-Treatment¹

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This is a welcome addition to the scientific literature on vital bleaching. This article compiles some of the earliest studies that were completed using tooth-whitening agents 10 to 17 years ago at the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry. This article concludes that "Nightguard vital bleaching with 10% CP was found to be effective with minimal side effects up to 17 years post-treatment."

Concern has been expressed in the past about the possible long-term effects of bleaching with peroxides. We now have published data that treatment with 10% carbamide peroxide appears to be clinically safe and effective to use intraorally, as the American Dental Association² has claimed, even for extended periods of time. The clinical safety of peroxide with regard to its carcinogenicity has been reported in a study by Munro.³

One of the main concerns with this article is that patients were asked 10 to 17 years after the procedure if they experienced "any kind of problem during" or "immediately after" treatment. Forty-eight percent of patients reported that they experienced problems "during" treatment and only 3% "after" treatment. The article should have cited the original published data references so the reader could get further information on the original findings. The initial sensitivity data should have been compared with the sensitivity reported at 10 to 17 years postbleaching. It is probable that two of the three studies are included in the references.^{4,5}

It has been shown that subjects are influenced very easily when surveys or self-reporting data are used. Bias may be introduced by background conversation a patient may hear. Subjects want to help researchers succeed and will often report what researchers want to hear. It is hard to know if any bias occurred in this study, as we are not informed under what circumstances the questionnaires were filled out. It is important to try to obtain and report objective data that has been universally accepted instead of self-reported data.

Regardless of some of the concerns in the protocol and the small sample size of 31, 13 of which had not bleached since that time, it is impressive that these researchers were able to find patients who participated in their studies from 10 to 17 years ago. It is a confirming article of what the American Dental Association has published that "Accumulated clinical data on neutral pH 10% carbamide peroxide continue to support both the safety and efficacy of this kind of tooth-whitening agent."²

REFERENCES

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