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Expression of *MMPs* and *TIMP-1* in smoker and nonsmoker chronic periodontitis patients before and after periodontal treatment

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Background and Objective: Nonsurgical periodontal treatment controls periodontal inflammation. Matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs) and their tissue inhibitors (TIMPs) are implicated both in the destruction and in the healing of periodontal tissues. The aim of the present study was to compare the mRNA expression of *MMP-1*, *-3*, *-8*, *-9* and *-13* and *TIMP-1* in chronic periodontitis before and after initial periodontal treatment.

Material and Methods: Ninety gingival samples were harvested from 30 patients with chronic periodontitis (15 nonsmokers and 15 smokers) before and after nonsurgical treatment and from 30 periodontally healthy control subjects (15 nonsmokers and 15 smokers). Clinical parameters were assessed before and after treatment. Total RNA was isolated, and mRNA expression of *MMPs* and *TIMP-1* was assessed by RT-PCR.

Results: Periodontal treatment significantly increased *TIMP-1* expression and decreased the ratios of *MMPs/TIMP-1*. Post-treatment, nonsmokers with periodontitis had significantly higher *MMP-8* and *TIMP-1* expression than healthy nonsmokers, and smokers with periodontitis had significantly higher *MMP-13* and *TIMP-1* expressions than healthy smokers. Post-treatment, smokers had significantly higher *TIMP-1* expression and lower *MMP-8/TIMP-1* ratio than non-smokers. Post-treatment, there was no correlation among *MMPs*, and the expression of *MMPs* and *TIMP-1* was not correlated with clinical measurements.

Conclusion: Periodontal treatment increased *TIMP-1* expression and decreased the ratios of *MMPs/TIMP-1* in chronic periodontitis. The post-treatment increase in *TIMP-1* expression was higher for smokers. The *TIMP-1* expression was higher post-treatment than in health. Post-treatment, *MMP-8* expression was higher in nonsmokers with periodontitis than in healthy nonsmokers, whereas *MMP-13* expression was higher in smokers with periodontitis than in healthy smokers.

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Periodontitis develops as a result of an imbalance between dental plaque micro-organisms that act on periodontal tissues and host defense mechanisms (1,2). Nonsurgical periodontal treatment aims to control the periodontal inflammation by reducing the periopathogenic micro-organisms and their products and by giving the host the chance to heal. It results in a reduction in bleeding on probing and probing depth and a gain in clinical attachment (3,4). The improvement in clinical parameters following nonsurgical treatment has been sufficiently documented (5-7), but the possible association between clinical improvement achieved with treatment and changes in the expression of inflammatory and immunological genes has not yet been thoroughly analysed. Studies attempting to analyse the expression of inflammation-related genes following nonsurgical treatment have been limited to selected genes, such as interleukin (*IL*)-1 β , interferon- γ , *IL*-2, *IL*-4, *IL-5*, *IL-6* and tumor necrosis factor- α (8,9). A more comprehensive analysis of gene expression related to immune and inflammatory processes is required to increase our understanding of the way in which specific genes are involved in tissue homeostasis following treatment.

Matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs) belong to a group of highly conserved endopeptidases that participate in many natural processes, such as tooth eruption, wound healing, angiogenesis and bone formation, as well as in inflammatory processes (10-12). Endogenous tissue inhibitors, especially tissue inhibitors of metalloproteinases (TIM-Ps), are important controlling factors in the actions of MMPs (13). A disturbed balance of MMPs and TIMPs is found in various pathological conditions (14), including periodontitis (15-17). Tissue destruction often correlates with an inbalance between MMPs and TIMPs (13,14,18). Tissue inhibitor of metalloproteinases-1 (TIMP-1), a 30 kDa glycoprotein, is the main inhibitor of MMPs and is synthesized by most cells. TIMP-1 precisely regulates MMP activity and function and inhibits MMP-1, -2, -3, -8, -9 and -13 (19). It forms high-affinity complexes with the active forms of MMPs and might be specially bound to proMMP-9 (13,18). In addition to MMP-inhibing activities, TIMP-1 has other biological functions that are distinct from MMP inhibition. It has erythroid-potentiating activity and antiapoptotic activity (18).

Matrix metalloproteinases have been detected in periodontally diseased gingival tissues from chronic (15,16,20-33) and aggressive periodontitis (16,32,34). Gingival tissues from chronic periodontitis patients subjected to nonsurgical treatment and from periodontally healthy subjects have been compared in terms of mRNA expression of MMPs and *TIMP-1* (16,17,20,21,26,31–33). Differences have been reported between periodontitis and health (16,17,21,25,26), but mRNA expression of MMPs and TIMP-1 in gingival tissues has not yet been compared before and after periodontal treatment in the same subject population.

Of all MMPs, MMP-1, -3, -8, -9 and -13 were selected to be assessed in the present study because of their properties. The collagenases MMP-1, -8 and -13 play a key role in the destruction of the inflamed gingival connective tissue; specifically, they cleave interstitional collagens I, II and III at a specific site. Moreover, collagenases degrade a number of other extracellular matrix and nonextracellular matrix molecules (18). MMP-13 is involved in the initiation of bone resorption by degrading organic bone matrix and generating collagen fragments that could activate osteoclasts (35). MMP-13 induces proMMP-9 activation (36) and MMP-13 auto-activation (36,37). MMP-9, which is a gelatinase, degrades the denaturated collagen after being cleaved by collagenase and activates proMMP-1 (18). MMP-3, which is a stromelycin, degrades extracellular matrix components and activates various proMMPs, such as proMMP-1 (18). It seems that there are complex relationships among the MMPs.

When focusing on the progress of periodontitis, the changes in MMPs and TIMPs and the relationships between MMPs and TIMPs are important. Changes in the relationships between MMPs and their inhibitors might lead to lack of balance between them. This imbalance might enhance the progression of the inflammation or the healing of the tissues, accordingly. Exploring the relationship between each MMP studied and TIMP-1 seems important, because TIMP-1 inhibits all the MMPs studied. The MMP/TIMP-1 ratio reflects the relationship between a specific MMP and TIMP-1. Studying the possible relationship among the MMPs might reveal their role in periodontitis.

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An impaired outcome of periodontal treatment has been documented for smokers (38-41). Upregulation of the inflammation of the periodontal tissues has been implicated in the impaired response to periodontal treatment in smokers (42). Smoker periodontitis patients have demonstrated a decrease in certain proinflammatory cytokines and chemokines and certain regulators of T cells in comparison with nonsmoker periodontitis patients (43). Decreased levels of regulators of tissue breakdown have been found in smokers compared with nonsmokers (44). Chemically modifying inflammation and tissue breakdown by using a subantimicrobial dose of doxycycline as an adjunct to nonsurgical periodontal treatment has been reported to be clinically beneficial in nonsmokers (45) but not in smokers (42). The deleterious effect of smoking on the immune system justifies studying the expression of MMPs and TIMP-1 in relation to periodontal treatment in smoker and nonsmoker periodontitis patients separately.

The main hypothesis of the present study was that the mRNA expression of MMP-1, -3, -8, -9 and -13 and TIMP-1 is different post-treatment compared with pretreatment. The secondary hypothesis of the study was that the mRNA expression of MMP-1, -3, -8, -9 and -13 and TIMP-1 differs between periodontitis patients subjected to periodontal treatment and periodontally healthy control subjects. Another secondary hypothesis was that the changes of the mRNA expression of MMP-1, -3, -8, -9 and -13 and TIMP-1 obtained with periodontal treatment are different between smokers and nonsmokers. The first aim of the present interventional study was to compare the mRNA expression of *MMP-1*, -3, -8, -9 and -13 and *TIMP-1* in gingival tissues from chronic periodontitis patients before and after nonsurgical periodontal treatment. The second aim of this study was to compare mRNA expression of *MMP-1*, -3, -8, -9 and -13 and *TIMP-1* between chronic periodontitis patients after nonsurgical treatment and periodontally healthy control subjects. Moreover, the possible role of smoking in the changes in mRNA expression of *MMPs* and *TIMP-1* obtained with nonsurgical treatment was assessed.

Material and methods

Subject characteristics

The subject population was recruited from the patient pool of the Department of Periodontology, School of Dentistry, University of Athens in the period from January 2007 to June 2007. Among them, 30 experimental subjects presented generalized chronic severe periodontitis (CPS group, 15 smokers and CPN group, 15 nonsmokers) and 30 control subjects presented healthy and intact periodontium (HS group, 15 smokers and HN group, 15 nonsmokers). Subject inclusion and exclusion criteria and characteristics by study group (CPS, CPN, HS and HN) have been analysed in an earlier study by Mouzakiti et al. (46) involving the same subjects. Briefly, each periodontitis patient was systemically healthy and had a hopeless posterior tooth with probing depth ≥ 5 mm, clinical attachment loss \geq 5 mm and bleeding on probing without suppuration. In addition, the hopeless tooth had inadequate dental tissues to maintain the tooth and restore it and/or was not important for the treatment plan. Moreover, each periodontitis patient had at least 20 teeth and at least seven teeth with probing depth \geq 5 mm. For each periodontally healthy subject there was indication either for crown lengthening at a tooth site with no bleeding on probing, probing depth and clinical attachment loss or for extraction of a third molar with no bleeding on probing, probing depth and clinical attachment loss. Third molars were extracted due to unfavorable tooth position and/or absence of opposing teeth. All smokers were heavy smokers (daily cigarette consumption ≥ 20 cigarettes for at least 10 years). Each subject had signed an informed consent form prior to inclusion in the study. The study was approved by the Ethics and Research Committee of the School of Dentistry (approval no. 68, 22/1), University of Athens and was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki of 1975, as revised in 2000.

Clinical procedures

Clinical examination and periodontal treatment - All participants were subjected to clinical examination, including full-mouth plaque score (FMPS; 47), simplified gingival index (GI-S; 48), bleeding on probing, clinical attachment loss and probing depth (initial or pretreatment measurements). Each periodontitis patient was then subjected to nonsurgical treatment following the protocol of full-mouth disinfection (49-51) without using antibacterial products. Six weeks after, the same clinical parameters again were assessed, namely FMPS, GI-S, bleeding on probing, clinical attachment loss and probing depth (final or post-treatment measurements), and periodontal surgery was planned for sites with residual probing depth $\geq 5 \text{ mm}$ and bleeding on probing. Additionally, the following parameters were assessed for each periodontitis patient: pretreatment and post-treatment mean probing depth (mPD) and clinical attachment loss (mCAL), number of teeth with probing depth ≥ 5 mm, number of sites with probing depth $\geq 5 \text{ mm}$, percentage of sites with probing depth 4-6 mm, percentage of sites with probing depth \geq 7 mm, gingival tissue sampling (gingival) bleeding on probing, gingival tissue sampling (gingival) probing depth and gingival tissue sampling (gingival) clinical attachment loss. All clinical measurements and periodontal treatment were performed by the same operator (E.M.).

Gingival tissue sampling — For each periodontitis patient, two gingival tissue samples were harvested. The first sam-

ple was harvested during extraction of the periodontally hopeless tooth before the periodontal treatment, while the second sample was harvested from another area during pocket elimination surgery. Caution was taken to select for each periodontitis patient sampling sites with similar pretreatment clinical measurements in terms of probing depth, clinical attachment loss and bleeding on probing. For each healthy control subject, one tissue sample was harvested during surgical crown lengthening or third molar extraction. The gingival tissue samples were harvested by using external bevel gingivectomy incision and a fresh no. 15c blade. The weight of each gingival tissue sample ranged from 20 to 60 mg. Upon tissue harvesting, the oral epithelium of the tissue sample was carefully excised from the underlying connective tissue, using a fresh no. 15c blade. Care was taken to remove the oral epithelium completely or almost completely. The sample consisted mainly of connective tissue and pocket epithelium, although tissue samples might vary slightly in contents of different tissue types (connective tissue and epithelium).

Isolation of total RNA and RT-PCR

Following the collection of each gingival tissue sample, the sample was submerged in 10 volumes of RNAlater solution (Qiagen, Valencia, CA, USA), stored for 1 d at 4° C and then at -20° C until use. Homogenization and total RNA isolation were performed using RNeasy MiniKit (Qiagen) following the manufacturer's instructions. Total RNA (1 µg) was reverse transcribed to complementary DNA with Super-Script II Reverse Transcriptase (Invitrogen) primed with oligo-dT in a final concentration of 20 pmol/µL. A ribonuclease inhibitor (RNaseOUT; Invitrogen, Darmstadt, Germany) was also included in the reaction at a final concentration of 1 U/µL. All RT reactions were performed independently of the PCRs. An evaluation of RNA quality was performed for all samples. The quantity and purity of the isolated RNA was assessed using the NanoDrop ND-1000 spectrophotometer (Fisher Scientific, Loughborough,

UK). Absorbance at 260 and 280 nm was measured, and in all cases the ratio was near or equal to two, thus indicating the purity of the samples. Moreover, another quality control was performed in order to evaluate the integrity of the RNA samples. Total RNA was resolved on a denaturating agarose gel containing ethidium bromide and visualized under ultraviolet light. All samples exhibited two discrete, thick 28S and 18S ribosomal RNA gel bands with no smear, thus indicating the integrity of the samples. Gene-specific oligonucleotide primers were designed for MMP-1 (52-55), -3 (52), -8, -9 (the primers for MMP-8 and MMP-9 were designed by Dr Gerassimos Voutsinas, Institute of Biology, National Center of Scientific Research 'Demokritos', Athens) and -13 (53), TIMP-1 (54) and glyceraldehyde 3phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH; Invitrogen; 55). One microliter of complementary DNA was amplified with 10 pmol/µL primers at a final volume of 25 µL. Negative controls were used for each RT-PCR, omitting the template. The efficiency of reverse transcription was verified by the detection of GAPDH. All products were resolved on a 2% agarose gel containing ethidium bromide and visualized under ultraviolet light.

Densitometry

Densitometry was used to quantify the band intensity on PCR photographs, using the ImageJ program (National Institutes of Health). Densitometry was used in order to ascribe a specific numerical unit to each PCR band so as to compare all bands in a computerized manner with no human interference. In order to calculate the intensity of each band, we used a specific outlined rectanglular for every PCR product, transferred to each lane. Lanes with negative PCR products or bands too weak to resolve on an ethidium bromide stained agarose gel, displayed only background density (BD) from the gel. On the contrary, positive PCR products displayed the sum (SD) of the background density plus the actual density of the product band (ADPB). For negative samples, the equation is SD = BD + ADPB, where ADPB = 0, and for positive samples the equation is SD = BD + ADPB, where ADPB > 0. The intensity of the band representing each RT-PCR product for *MMP-1*, -3, -8, -9 and -13 and *TIMP-1* was normalized to the intensity of the band for the house-keeping gene *GAPDH* and expressed as a ratio of relative band intensity. All experiments were repeated twice to ensure statistical accuracy.

Statistical analysis

Mean values and standard deviations or medians $[Q_1 - Q_3]$ (Q1 stands for the 1st quartile, Q3 stands for the 3rd quartile)] were calculated for normally and nonnormally distributed continuous variables, respectively. Differences and treatment changes in clinical measurements among the study groups were compared using Student's unpaired t-test or Mann-Whitney U-test for normally and non-normally distributed continuous variables, respectively. The mRNA expression differences within groups were assessed using Student's paired t-test or Wilcoxon signed-rank test for paired data for normally and non-normally distributed continuous variables. Chi-squared or McNemar test was applied to test for differences in categorical variables.

Correlations of post-treatment *MMPs* and *TIMP-1* expression with clinical measurements were studied using Spearman correlation coefficient. Multivariate logistic regression analysis was used to assess associations of the expression of *MMPs* and *TIMP-1* with potential confounders, such as age. A commercially available statistical software program (STATA 9.0; Stata, College Station, TX, USA) was used for statistical analysis. Statistical significance was set at 5% (p = 0.05).

Results

Sex was equally distributed among the four subject groups. The number of men was: six, five, seven and six men for CPS, CPN, HS and HN groups, respectively. The mean age of the subjects was 49.3 ± 8.35 , 51.7 ± 6.15 , 33.75 ± 6.07 and 36.8 ± 9.15 years for

CPS, CPN, HS and HN groups, respectively. The mean age did not statistically significantly differ between CPS and CPN groups or between HS and HN groups. The CPS and HS groups were similar in smoking habits.

Clinical measurements

The CPS and CPN groups did not statistically significantly differ in pretreatment clinical measurements. Periodontal treatment led to statistically significant reduction in all clinical measurements (FMPS, GI-S, bleeding on probing, mPD, mCAL, percentage of sites with probing depth 4–6 mm, percentage of sites with probing depth \geq 7 mm) in both experimental groups (Table 1). Changes in all clinical measurements achieved with periodontal treatment were not statistically significantly different between the two groups.

For the CPS group, the first and second sampling sites did not statistically significantly differ in initial (pretreatment) probing depth (mean values 6.6 ± 1.7 and 5.9 ± 1.2 mm, respectively, p = 0.22), clinical attachment loss (mean values 7.1 ± 2.4 and 6.5 ± 1.5 mm, respectively, p = 0.11) and bleeding on probing (100 and 100%, respectively). For the CPN group, the first and second sampling sites did not statistically significantly differ in initial clinical attachment loss (mean values 7.9 \pm 2.9 and 7.4 \pm 2.4 mm, respectively, p = 0.39) and bleeding on probing (100 and 100%, respectively), but they did differ in initial probing depth (mean values 7.7 \pm 2.9 and 7.1 \pm 2.1 mm, respectively, p = 0.02; data not shown).

The CPN and CPS groups were not statistically significantly different in initial clinical measurements at the second sampling site (Table 1), but there were nonstatistically significant indications that the initial probing depth at the second sampling site was greater for CPN (7.1 \pm 2.1 mm) than the CPS group (5.9 \pm 1.2 mm, p = 0.06; Table 1). Initial and final (post-treatment) clinical measurements at the second sampling site were compared for each experimental group. For both CPN and CPS groups, the

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Table 1	Comparison	of initia	l and final	clinical	measurements	hv	neriodonfifis	orour
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	CPN			CPS			
Parameter	Initial	Final	<i>p</i> -Value* ^a	Initial	Final	p-Value*b	
FMPS (%)	77.3 ± 16.1	16.3 ± 7.2	< 0.001	71.7 ± 21.0	14.7 ± 7.1 <	0.001	
GI-S	76 (62–100)†	14 (9-21)†	0.001†	65 (52-81)†	8 (4-20)†	0.001†	
Bleeding on probing	69.3 ± 15.9	23.9 ± 13.8	< 0.001	68.9 ± 19.0	17.1 ± 9.4 <	0.001	
mPD (mm)	$3.7~\pm~0.8$	$3.0~\pm~0.7$	< 0.001	$3.6~\pm~0.7$	2.9 ± 0.6 <	0.001	
mCAL (mm)	3.5 (3.3-4.7)†	3.0 (2.7-3.9)†	0.001†	4 (3.1-4.3)†	3.2 (2.2-3.9)†	0.001†	
% sites PD 4–6 mm	36.1 ± 13.9	$21.4~\pm~12.3$	< 0.001	41.3 ± 16.1	20.0 ± 12.6 <	0.001	
% sites $PD \ge 7 \text{ mm}$	5 (1.6–9)†	0 (0-1.6)†	0.002†	3 (0.5-4.5)†	0 (0-1.2)†	0.002†	
Mean gingival probing depth (mm)	7.1 ± 2.1	5.6 ± 1.7	< 0.001	5.9 ± 1.2	4.5 ± 1.2 <	0.001	
Mean gingival clinical attachment loss (mm)	7.4 ± 2.4	$6.7~\pm~2.4$	0.05	$6.5~\pm~1.5$	5.4 ± 1.8 <	0.001	
Gingival bleeding on probing	15/15 (100%)‡	12/15 (80%)‡	0.25‡	15/15 (100%)‡	8/15 (53.33%)‡	0.01‡	

Values are means \pm SD. Abbreviations: FMPS, full mouth plaque score, GI-S, simplified gingival index; % sites PD 4–6 mm, % of sites with probing depth between 4 and 6 mm; and % sites PD \geq 7 mm, % of sites with probing depth equal to or deeper than 7 mm.

^a Final vs. initial measurements for CPN, nonsmoker periodontitis subjects group.

^b Final vs. initial measurements for CPS, smoker periodontitis subjects group.

**p*-Values were obtained by using Student's paired *t*-test.

[†]Values are medians $(Q_1 - Q_3)$ and *p*-values were obtained by using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

‡Values are percentages and *p*-values were obtained by using McNemar's test.

mean final probing depth (5.6 \pm 1.7 and 5.4 \pm 1.8 mm, respectively) and clinical attachment loss (6.7 \pm 2.4 and 5.4 ± 1.8 mm, respectively) at the second sampling site were statistically significantly lower compared with the initial measurements (Table 1). Bleeding on probing at the second sampling site was reduced for both groups, although this was statistically significant only for the CPS group. Final bleeding on probing at the second sampling site was not different between the CPN and CPS groups (p = 0.12). The changes in clinical measurements obtained with treatment at the second sampling sites were similar for both CPN (mean change in probing depth 1.5 ± 1.0 mm and for clinical attachment loss 0.7 ± 1.3 mm) and CPS groups (mean change in probing depth 1.4 ± 0.9 mm and mean change in clinical attachment loss 1.1 \pm 0.8 mm; p = 0.85, 0.33 and 0.12 for probing depth, clinical attachment loss and bleeding on probing, respectively).

mRNA expression of *MMPs* and *TIMP-1*

The number of gingival tissue samples with *MMPs* and *TIMP-1* expression by study group are shown in Table 2.

The mRNA expression of *MMP-1*, -3, -8, -9 and -13 and *TIMP-1* and *MMP*/*TIMP-1* ratios were compared

Table 2.	Number	of	gingival	tissue	samples	with	MMPs	and	TIMP-1	expression	by	study
group												

Gene	CPN ₁	CPS_1	CPN ₂	CPS ₂	HN	HS
MMP-1	15/15	7/15	10/15	8/15	10/15	6/15
MMP-3	12/15	12/15	10/15	5/15	13/15	10/15
MMP-8	11/15	14/15	11/15	7/15	5/15	10/15
MMP-9	9/15	12/15	7/15	11/15	9/15	7/15
MMP-13	0/15	4/15	9/15	6/15	11/15	1/15
TIMP-1	13/15	15/15	14/15	14/15	10/15	9/15

Abbreviations: CPN_1 and CPS_1 , initial samples from CPN and CPS groups, respectively; CPN_2 and CPS_2 , final samples from CPN and CPS groups, respectively, HN, nonsmoker periodontally healthy subjects, HS, smoker periodontally healthy subjects.

for each experimental group (CPN and CPS) pre- and post-treatment, between post-treatment CPN CPS and (Table 3), between CPN post-treatment and HN and between CPS posttreatment and HS (Table 4). For the CPN group, pre- and post-treatment values were statistically significantly different in TIMP-1 expression and MMP-1/TIMP-1 ratio, with higher TIMP-1 expression (p = 0.009; Table 3) and lower MMP-1/TIMP-1 ratio (p = 0.01; Table 5) post-treatment. For the CPS group, pre- and posttreatment values were statistically significantly different in TIMP-1 expression and MMP-8/TIMP-1 and MMP-9/TIMP-1 ratios, with higher TIMP-1 expression (p = 0.009; Table 3) and lower MMP-8/TIMP-1 and MMP-9/ *TIMP-1* ratios (p = 0.07 and 0.001,respectively; Table 5) post-treatment. The CPN group post-treatment and the HN group differed in MMP-8 and TIMP-1 expression, with higher values for the CPN group (p = 0.04 and 0.03,respectively; Table 4). The CPS group post-treatment and the HS group differed in MMP-13 and TIMP-1 expression, with higher values for the CPS group (p = 0.02 and 0.0004, respectively; Table 4), as well as in MMP-3/ TIMP-1 and MMP-8/TIMP-1 ratios, which were lower (p = 0.02 and 0.03,respectively; Table 6) for the CPS group. The CPN and CPS groups posttreatment differed only in TIMP-1 expression and MMP-8/TIMP-1 ratio, with higher TIMP-1 expression (p =0.0009; Table 3) and lower MMP-8/ TIMP-1 ratio (p = 0.03; Table 5) in the CPS group.

Changes in *MMPs* and *TIMP-1* expression and in *MMPs/TIMP-1*

Table 3. Pre- and post-treatment MMPs and TIMP-1 expression: analysis by periodontitis group and comparison among the periodontitis groups

	CPN ₁	CPN ₂		CPS ₁	CPS ₂		
Gene	Median $(Q_1 - Q_3)$		<i>p</i> -Value* ^a	Median $(Q_1 - Q_3)$		<i>p</i> -Value* ^b	<i>p</i> -Value† ^c
MMP-1	0.55 (0.34-0.81)	0.31 (0-0.54)	0.11	0 (0-0.37)	0.25 (0-0.51)	0.53	0.45
MMP-3	0.35 (0.16-0.86)	0.47 (0-0.76)	0.88	0.23 (0.04-0.51)	0 (0-0.76)	0.55	0.19
MMP-8	0.78 (0-1.08)	0.70 (0-1.13)	0.81	0.6 (0.55-0.77)	0 (0-0.81)	0.20	0.14
MMP-9	0.21 (0-0.46)	0 (0-0.96)	0.27	0.51 (0.40-0.64)	0.54 (0-0.64)	0.31	0.48
MMP-13	0‡	0.73 (0-1.16)		0 (0-0.65)	0 (0-0.78)	0.31	0.32
TIMP-1	0.41 (0.28-0.56)	0.75 (0.5-0.83)	0.009	0.56 (0.50-0.59)	0.94 (0.82–1.08)	0.009	0.009

Abbreviations: CPN₁ and CPS₁, pretreatment (initial) *MMP* or *TIMP-1* expression for CPN and CPS groups, respectively; CPN₂ and CPS₂, post-treatment (final) *MMP* or *TIMP-1* expression for CPN and CPS groups, respectively.

^a CPN₂ vs. CPN₁, ^b CPS₂ vs. CPS₁ and ^c CPN₂ vs. CPS₂.

*p-Values were obtained by using the Wilcoxon signed rank test.

†p-Values were obtained by using the Mann–Whitney *U*-test.

‡Constant and equal to 0.

Table 4. MMPs and TIMP-1 expression: comparison between the periodontitis groups post-treatment and the healthy control groups

Gene	CPN ₂	HN		CPS ₂	HS	
	Median $(Q_1 - Q_3)$		<i>p</i> -Value* ^a	Median $(Q_1 - Q_3)$	Median $(Q_1 - Q_3)$	
MMP-1	0.31 (0-0.54)	0.34 (0-0.63)	0.90	0.25 (0-0.51)	0 (0-0.63)	0.86
MMP-3	0.47 (0-0.76)	0.58 (0.35-0.66)	0.60	0 (0-0.76)	0.70 (0-0.81)	0.13
MMP-8	0.70 (0-1.13)	0 (0-0.77)	0.04	0 (0-0.81)	0.55 (0-1.13)	0.29
MMP-9	0 (0-0.96)	0.36 (0-0.71)	0.74	0.54 (0-0.64)	0 (0-0.54)	0.21
MMP-13	0.73 (0-1.16)	0.54 (0-0.83)	0.95	0 (0-0.78)	0 (0-0)	0.02
TIMP-1	0.75 (0.5–0.83)	0.44 (0-0.65)	0.03	0.94 (0.82–1.08)	0.37 (0-0.60)	0.0004

Abbreviations: CPN₂ and CPS₂, post-treatment (final) *MMP* or *TIMP-1* expression for CPN and CPS groups, respectively.

^a CPN₂ vs. HN and ^b CPS₂ vs. HS.

*p-Values were obtained by using the Mann-Whitney U-test.

Table 5. Pre- and post-treatment MMPs/TIMP-1 ratios: analysis by periodontitis group and comparison among the periodontitis groups

CPN_1	CPN ₂		CPS ₁	CPS ₂		
Median $(Q_1 - Q_3)$		<i>p</i> -Value* ^a	Median $(Q_1 - Q_3)$		p-Value* ^b	<i>p</i> -Value ^{†°}
1.20 (1.04–1.41)	0.67 (0-0.92)	0.01	0 (0-0.69)	0.26 (0-0.62)	0.87	0.08
0.80 (0.56-1.64)	0.63 (0-0.91)	0.51	0.42 (0.07-1.32)	0 (0-0.77)	0.21	0.06
2.05 (0-2.36)	1.02 (0-1.24)	0.17	1.12 (0.84–1.47)	0 (0-0.85)	0.007	0.03
0.63 (0–0.92) 0 ⁺	0 (0-1.12) 0 64 (0-1.89)	0.91	0.98 (0.70–1.50)	0.56 (0-0.73) 0 (0-92)	0.01 0.36	0.53
	$\begin{tabular}{ c c c c c } \hline CPN_1 & & \\ \hline Median (Q_1-Q_3) & \\ \hline 1.20 & (1.04-1.41) & \\ 0.80 & (0.56-1.64) & \\ 2.05 & (0-2.36) & \\ 0.63 & (0-0.92) & \\ 0 & \\ t & \\ \hline \end{tabular}$	$\begin{array}{c c} \mbox{CPN}_1 & \mbox{CPN}_2 \\ \hline \mbox{Median} (Q_1 - Q_3) \\ \hline \\ 1.20 & (1.04 - 1.41) & 0.67 & (0 - 0.92) \\ 0.80 & (0.56 - 1.64) & 0.63 & (0 - 0.91) \\ 2.05 & (0 - 2.36) & 1.02 & (0 - 1.24) \\ 0.63 & (0 - 0.92) & 0 & (0 - 1.12) \\ 0 & & 0.64 & (0 - 1.89) \\ \hline \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c c} \underline{\text{CPN}_1} & \underline{\text{CPN}_2} \\ \hline \\ \hline \\ \underline{\text{Median}} (Q_1 - Q_3) & p - \text{Value}^{*a} \\ \hline \\ 1.20 & (1.04 - 1.41) & 0.67 & (0 - 0.92) & 0.01 \\ 0.80 & (0.56 - 1.64) & 0.63 & (0 - 0.91) & 0.51 \\ 2.05 & (0 - 2.36) & 1.02 & (0 - 1.24) & 0.17 \\ 0.63 & (0 - 0.92) & 0 & (0 - 1.12) & 0.91 \\ 0 & & 0.64 & (0 - 1.89) & - \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c $	$\begin{array}{c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c $	$\begin{array}{c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c $

Abbreviations: CPN₁ and CPS₁: pretreatment (initial) *MMP/TIMP-1* ratio for CPN and CPS groups, respectively; CPN₂ and CPS₂, post-treatment (final) *MMP/TIMP-1* ratio for CPN and CPS groups, respectively.

^a CPN₂ vs. CPN₁, ^b CPS₂ vs. CPS₁ and ^c CPN₂ vs. CPS₂.

*p-Values were obtained by using the Wilcoxon signed rank test.

†p-Values were obtained by using the Mann–Whitney U-test.

‡Constant and equal to 0.

ratios obtained with treatment were compared between the CPN and CPS groups. There were no statistically significant differences between them, except for the MMP-1/TIMP-1 ratio change (p = 0.02), which was larger for the CPN group (data not shown).

There were no correlations among the *MMPs* expression for groups CPN and CPS post-treatment (data not shown).

The possible existence of an association between the post-treatment expression of *MMPs* and *TIMP-1* and the final clinical measurements (FMPS, GI-S, bleeding on probing, mPD and mCAL) as well as between changes in the expression of *MMPs* and *TIMP-1* and changes in clinical measurements obtained with treatment was studied (data not shown). No statistically significant associations were found.

	CPN ₂	HN		CPS ₂	HS		
Ratio	Median $(Q_1 - Q_3)$		<i>p</i> -Value† ^a	Median $(Q_1 - Q_3)$		p-Value ^{†b}	
MMP-1/TIMP-1	0.67 (0-0.92)	0.64 (0-1.23)	1.00	0.26 (0-0.62)	0 (0-0.90)	0.69	
MMP-3/TIMP-1	0.63 (0-0.91)	0.98 (0.44-1.97)	0.23	0 (0-0.77)	1.06 (0.06-1.29)	0.02	
MMP-8/TIMP-1	1.02 (0-1.24)	0 (0-1.05)	0.09	0 (0-0.85)	1.32 (0-1.46)	0.03	
MMP-9/TIMP-1	0 (0-1.12)	1.17 (0-1.97)	0.11	0.56 (0-0.73)	0.77 (0-1.42)	0.28	
MMP-13/TIMP-1	0.64 (0-1.89)	1.50 (0.67–1.75)	0.22	0 (0-92)	0‡		

Table 6. Pre- and post-treatment MMPs/TIMP-1 ratios: analysis by periodontitis group and comparison among the periodontitis groups

Abbreviations: CPN_1 and CPS_1 : pretreatment (initial) MMP/TIMP-1 ratio for CPN and CPS groups, respectively; CPN_2 and CPS_2 , post-treatment (final) MMP/TIMP-1 ratio for CPN and CPS groups, respectively.

^a CPN₂ vs. CPN₁, ^b CPS₂ vs. CPS₁ and ^c CPN₂ vs. CPS₂.

**p*-Values were obtained by using the Wilcoxon signed rank test.

†p-Values were obtained by using the Mann–Whitney *U*-test.

‡Constant and equal to 0.

Discussion

In the present study, all clinical parameters were significantly improved with nonsurgical periodontal treatment both for smokers and nonsmokers, with similar degrees of improvement. In most studies, smokers exhibit less favorable clinical response to nonsurgical periodontal treatment than nonsmokers (38–41), some of which are relatively long-term. In the present short-term study, the final evaluation was 6 wk after nonsurgical treatment. The findings of the present study on similar probing depth reduction and clinical attachment loss gain for smokers and nonsmokers at 6 wk posttreatment are in disagreement with the findings of Baumert Ah et al. (38) and Kadhal et al. (39) at 4 wk and with the findings of Apatzidou et al. (41) at 6 mo. The present similar reduction in bleeding on probing for smokers and nonsmokers is in accordance with the report by Kaldahl et al. (39). The present similar changes in FMPS, bleeding on probing and clinical attachment loss for smokers and nonsmokers at 6 wk post-treatment is in agreement with the results by Renvert et al. (40) at 6 mo post-treatment. The present similar reduction in probing depth with treatment for smokers and nonsmokers disagrees with the findings of Renvert et al. (40), who reported greater reduction for nonsmokers.

Having similar clinical measurements among the sampling sites was important in the present study. Smokers and nonsmokers had similar initial clinical measurements (probing depth, clinical attachment loss and bleeding on probing) at the second sampling site. Smokers and nonsmokers presented similar clinical measurement changes (probing depth, clinical attachment loss and bleeding on probing) with periodontal treatment at the second site. The two sampling sites (first and second) did not differ in initial probing depth, clinical attachment loss and bleeding on probing for smokers and in initial clinical attachment loss and bleeding on probing for nonsmokers. The mean initial probing depth was significantly deeper at the first $(7.7 \pm 2.9 \text{ mm})$ than at the second sampling site $(7.1 \pm 2.1 \text{ mm})$ for nonsmokers. The rationale for using two distinct tissue sampling sites for each periodontitis patient (one before and one after the periodontal treatment) was that a specific site can be used for tissue harvesting only once. Harvesting gingival tissues by using external gingivectomy incision is a minor surgical intervention, which would affect the clinical parameters, such as pocket depth. Therefore, if tissues were to be collected twice from the same site, the first tissue harvesting (before the periodontal treatment) might alter the findings from the second one.

Concerning the second sampling site, treatment significantly improved all clinical parameters in smokers, but it led to a significant probing depth reduction and clinical attachment loss gain and nonsignificant reduction in bleeding on probing in nonsmokers. Post-treatment, bleeding on probing remained in some sampling sites (12 for nonsmokers and eight for smokers), which could be attributed to the clinical characteristics. Sites with residual pockets and indication for pocket elimination surgery were selected as second sampling sites, which entails the risk of residual inflammation; however, the changes in probing depth, clinical attachment loss and bleeding on probing obtained with periodontal treatment at the second sampling site did not differ significantly between smokers and nonsmokers. The possibility of residual inflammation at the second sampling site after the nonsurgical periodontal treatment cannot be excluded. Nonsurgical treatment often results in reduction of the inflammation, not necessarily in elimination of the inflammation (3,4).

The pretreatment differences in MMP-1 and -3 expression between smokers and nonsmokers reported previously by Mouzakiti et al. (46) were eliminated post-treatment. TIMP-1 expression was higher for smoker than nonsmoker periodontitis patients both before (46) and after periodontal treatment. This might partly be attributed to smoking, because both groups had similar initial and final clinical measurements and response to treatment. Concerning the TIMP-1 expression, the nonsurgical treatment did not change the pretreatment relationship between smokers and nonsmokers.

Higher post-treatment *MMP-13* expression was found for smokers

with periodontitis than for healthy smokers. The higher pretreatment MMP-8 expression reported previously (46) for nonsmoker periodontitis patients compared with healthy nonsmokers remained even after treatment. This might be explained by the possible residual inflammation at the second sampling sites and the association of MMP-8 with inflammation. Even though all clinical parameters were improved following treatment, inflammation was not completely eliminated. MMP-8 is mainly expressed by neutrophils, which are highly recruited during inflammation (56). In smokers, the MMP-8 expression was similar for periodontitis post-treatment and for periodontal health. Posttreatment, there were nonstatistically significant indications that the combination of periodontitis and smoking resulted in lower MMP-8 expression than periodontitis alone. These findings may partly be explained by the following data. Smoking is related to upregulation of inflammation, endothelial cell dysfunction, impaired viability and function of the neutrophils (57), impaired macrophage function, lower gingival blood flow rate and gingival crevicular fluid volume (58) and lower gingival crevicular fluid IL-1a, IL-1ra (59,60) and IL-1ß levels (61). MMP-8 is expressed by neutrophils, but by human endothelial cells as well (56). MMP-8 is upregulated by IL-1 α , β and tumor necrosis factor-a (62,63). Peripheral neutrophil mRNA expression levels for MMP-8 have been found to be lower for smokers than nonsmokers and increased 8 wk after smoking cessation (61).

Periodontal treatment reduced certain *MMP/TIMP-1* ratios, although this was different between smokers (*MMP-8/TIMP-1* and *MMP-9/TIMP-1*) and nonsmokers (*MMP-1/TIMP-1*). The mean changes in *MMP/TIMP-1* ratios obtained with treatment were similar for smokers and nonsmokers, except for *MMP-1/TIMP-1*, for which the changes were greater for nonsmokers. This might be explained by the higher *TIMP-1* expression in smokers than in nonsmokers. TIMP-1 has the widest range of actions among all metalloproteinase inhibitors (15) and binds to most MMPs, which makes the assessment of the *MMP/TIMP-1* ratios important.

TIMP-1 expression was increased post-treatment compared with pretreatment, for both smokers and nonsmokers, with both having a similar increase. The increased post-treatment TIMP-1 expression might be attributed to tissue changes occurring during healing and to an attempt to overcome tissue destruction caused by MMPs. The increased TIMP-1 expression might control the production of MMPs during healing and gradually help to restore the balance between MMPs and TIMP-1. It might be an attempt to suppress the production and activity of MMPs and restore the balance between MMPs and their inhibitors.

Post-treatment, *TIMP-1* expression was higher for chronic periodontitis than for periodontal health both for smokers and nonsmokers. Concerning *TIMP-1* expression, the present findings together with previous findings (46) on the same subject population showed that nonsurgical treatment did not change the pretreatment relationship between periodontitis and health, in both smokers and nonsmokers.

The present and previous findings (46) demonstrated that smokers had higher *TIMP-1* expression than non-smokers both before and after treatment. The statistical significance of the difference was stronger after (p = 0.009) than before treatment (p = 0.01).

The present findings on the absence of a difference in MMP-1 expression between periodontitis post-treatment and periodontal health are in accordance with findings by Dahan et al. (26) and Gonçalves et al. (31). Goncalves et al. (31) studied only nonsmokers and found nonstatistically significant indications that MMP-1 expression was higher in periodontitis. The present findings contradict results by Beikler et al. (33) and Kubota et al. (17) on higher post-treatment MMP-1 expression in periodontitis than health. The studies by Beikler et al. (33) and Kubota et al. (17) evaluated periodontitis patients after the periodontal treatment and subjects with healthy periodontium, but the two studies are not really comparable to each other. Both Kubota et al. (17) and Beikler et al. (33) showed higher post-treatment MMP-1 expression in periodontitis; however, these studies have differences in the study design that make comparisons difficult, such as differences in the procedure of the nonsurgical periodontal treatment, the timing of the gingival sampling, the mean probing depth at the gingival sampling sites and the method used to assess MMPs. A study by Aiba et al. (25) showed no difference in MMP-1 periodontitis expression between patients and control subjects. In the study by Aiba et al. (25), it seems that the control group included periodontally affected subjects with residual pockets; therefore, the compared groups were periodontal patients before (experimental) and after nonsurgical treatment (control). The present findings, where the same subjects were compared before and after treatment, are in accordance with the results of Aiba et al. (25) on the absence of difference in MMP-1 expression with periodontal treatment.

The absence of difference in posttreatment *MMP-3* expression between periodontitis and health found in the present study agrees with results by Tonetti *et al.* (20) and Kubota *et al.* (16). In an earlier study by Kubota *et al.* (17), where RT-PCR was used, there was higher *MMP-3* expression for periodontitis patients, but in a subsequent study by the same authors (16), where real-time RT-PCR was used, there were only nonstatistically significant indications of higher *MMP-3* expression in periodontitis.

Kubota *et al.* (17) reported higher post-treatment *MMP-8* expression in periodontitis than in health, though without reporting on smoking. Comparisons with their results are not feasible, because in the present study there was higher *MMP-8* expression only for nonsmokers. A later study by Kubota *et al.* (16) failed to assess *MMP-8* because of very low expression.

Similar post-treatment *MMP-9* expression between periodontitis and health was demonstrated by Kubota

et al. (16), without reporting on smoking, and by Gonçalves *et al.* (31) for nonsmokers. The present results are in accordance with these findings.

Concerning the post-treatment MMP-9 expression, Kubota et al. (16) and Gonçalves et al. (31) reported no difference between periodontitis and health, although there were nonsignificant indications of higher expression in periodontitis. The present study showed similar expression for nonsmokers, which is in agreement with Gonçalves et al. (31). Comparisons with the results of Kubota et al. (16) are not feasible, because the absence of difference was restricted to nonsmokers in the present study.

The *MMP/TIMP-1* ratios have been studied by Kubota *et al.* (16), with similar findings for periodontitis and health. In the present study, there were differences only for smokers, which do not permit comparisons between the two studies.

Smoking modulates the destruction of the periodontium through various pathways, such as the microcirculatory system, the host immune inflammatory response systems, the connective tissue and the bone metabolism (57). Smoking might be implicated in overproduction of cytokines, with a possible mechanism via MMP-9 (64). MMP-9 has previously been described to activate proMMP-13 (36,65). MMP-13, in turn, might be implicated in the proMMP-9 activation (37). It has been suggested that MMP-13 and MMP-9 can potentially form an activation cascade overcoming the protective TIMP-1 shield (37). The higher MMP-13 expression found for smoker periodontitis patients post-treatment than for healthy smokers in the present study might be linked to the relationship between MMP-13 and MMP-9. Furthermore, smoking may suppress the activities of protease inhibitors. α_2 -Macroglobulin is an inhibitor for several proteases, such as MMPs. It has been reported that smokers have a significantly lower concentration of α_{2} macroglobulin in gingival crevicular fluid and total amounts of α_2 -macroglobulin and α_1 -antitrypsin than nonsmokers (66). Nicotine has been found to downregulate IL-1 β secretion by gingival mononuclear cells (67). TIMP-1 is differentially regulated by tumor necrosis factor- α , IL-1 β and granulo-cyte-macrophage colony stimulating factor through prostaglandin-dependent and -independent mechanisms (68).

In the present study, RT-PCR was used for the assessment of the mRNA expression. The selection of real-time RT-PCR rather than RT-PCR would be preferable, though comparable results have been reported for both methods (69). Real-time PCR technology has revolutionized the potentials in detecting RNA and DNA, because efficiency and sensitivity are improved compared with conventional PCR. However, RT-PCR is still considered to be highly reliable in evaluating mRNA expression in a semi-quantitative approach, with great repeatability and sensitivity, and it is still used widely in experimental and diagnostic techniques (70). Different results when studying same molecules with real-time RT-PCR and RT-PCR may be attributed to the greater sensitivity of the former technique or to the experimental design, thus making it difficult to establish a reliable conclusion on the diversity of the results.

The administration of a subantimicrobial dose of doxycycline as an adjunct to nonsurgical periodontal treatment (41,45,71) enhances the clinical response to treatment. Gingival crevicular fluid MMP-8 has been further reduced with adjunctive use of a subantimicrobial dose of doxycycline to nonsurgical periodontal treatment (45,71-73). Modulation of the host response in addition to the elimination of the microbial load of the periodontal pockets might enhance the effectiveness of the periodontal treatment. Novel strategies aiming to increase the TIMP-1 expression further might enhance the outcome of periodontal treatment. Increasing the endogenous TIMP-1 expression or administrating engineered TIMP-1 might prove to be a beneficial adjunct to periodontal treatment. However, the overexpression of TIMP-1 could have drawbacks, because multiple MMPs might be inhibited. Of course, the increase in TIMP-1 expression may not be sufficient to compensate for the upregulation of all MMPs in periodontitis. Creating engineered TIMPs, which would have altered specificity, might help in targeting specific metalloproteinases.

Conclusions

Within its limits, this study demonstrated that periodontal treatment increased TIMP-1 expression and decreased MMPs/TIMP-1 ratios in nonsmoker and smoker chronic periodontitis patients. The post-treatment increase in TIMP-1 expression was higher for smokers than for nonsmokers. TIMP-1 expression was higher post-treatment than in health. Posttreatment, MMP-8 expression was higher in nonsmoker periodontitis patients than in nonsmoker healthy subjects, whereas MMP-13 expression was higher in smoker periodontitis patients than in smoker healthy subjects.

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