# Ferric Sulfate and Formocresol

We read with great interest the excellent paper by Dr. Louise B. Messer and her student co-workers entitled, "Evidence-based Assessment Evaluation of the Formocresol Versus Ferric Sulfate Primary Molar Pulpotomy."[1]

The evidence based dentistry steps used by the authors, particularly the comprehensive search of the literature and the sieving for inclusion criteria, resulted in a scientifically-based article of great value for clinical practice.

However, we would like to call Dr. Messer's attention to one point when discussing the clinical and radiographic success of the two ferric sulfate (FS) clinical trials included in the review.

The authors reported that based on the clinical data, FS was significantly more successful than Formocresol (FC) - Odd Ratio (OR) = 1.95; Confidence Interval (CI) = 1.01 – 3.80. Radiographic data however, indicated no difference between the two medicaments (OR = 0.90; CI = 0.58 – 1.39).

As it appears in Table 4, the successful radiographic data in our study[2] is limited to 74% (41 teeth). This is because in the original article, pulp canal obliteration, although not considered a failure, was recorded as a separate entity. Thus, in the radiographic findings we had:

**Table 4. Radiographic Findings at the Last Recall Examination***

| | Ferric Sulfate | | Formocresol | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % |
| Normal pulp | 41 | 74.5 | 27 | 73.0 |
| Pulp Canal Obliteration | 10 | 18.2 | 4 | 10.8 |

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Since the cases of pulp canal obliteration were not included in the success category, a new table, including these cases, was done. The new OR was 3.07 with a CI = 1.01 – 9.27. This OR shows a significant difference between the two treatments $P < 0.05$.

We would like again to thank Dr. Messer and her co-workers for the excellent article.

## References

1. Loh A, O'Hoy P, Tran X, Charles R, Hughes A, Kubo K, Messer LB. Evidence-based Assessment: Evaluation of the Formocresol Verus Ferric Sulfate Primary Molar Pulpotomy. Pediatr Dent 2004;26:401-409.
2. Fuks AB, Holan G, Davis JM, Eidelman E. Ferric Sulfate Versus Dilute Formocresol in Pulpotomized Primary Molars: Long-term Follow Up. Pediatr Dent 1997;19:327-330.

**Dr. Anna B. Fuks, Professor**
**Dr. Eliezer Eidelman, Professor**
Hebrew University–Hadassah School of Dental Medicine
Department of Pediatric Dentistry
Correspond with Dr. Fuks at: fuks@cc.huji.ac.il