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NOVEL IMAGINING TECHNIQUES FOR EARLY DETECTION OF DENTAL CARRIES

Dr Kashif Adnan[1*], Dr. Muhammad Usman[2], Syed Amjad Abbas[3], Dr. Hafiz Mahmood Azam[4], Anam Hameed[5], Muhammad Usman Majeed[6], Dr. Sibtain Afzal[7],

[1*]BDS,MFDS,RCPS(Glasgow),FICD,Demonstrator/Registrar,Maxillofacial Surgery Department, de' Montmorency College of Dentistry, Lahore. Kashifdcd@gmail.com
[2]BDS, DENTAL SURGEON, KHYBER MEDICAL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF DENTAL SCIENCES, ABBOTTABAD KPK. uxmanqureshi10@gmail.com
[3]Assistant Professor, Head of Department Oral Pathology, Rehman College of Dentistry, Peshawar. rizabas@hotmail.com
[4]BDS, M.phil .C.H.P.E Associate Professor, Head of Department, Science of Dental Materials Muhammed Medical and Dental college Mirpurkhas
[5]BS Zoology, Government College University Faisalabad. anumhammed33@gmail.com
[6]Faculty of Computing and Information Technology, University of the Punjab Lahore, Pakistan. Usmanmajeed256@gmail.com
[7]Senior Lecturer, College of Medicine, Al-Faisal University, Riyadh, KSA
Email: sibtainafzal@gmail.com

[*]**Corresponding Author:** Dr Kashif Adnan
[*]BDS,MFDS,RCPS(Glasgow), FICD, Demonstrator/Registrar, Maxillofacial Surgery Department, de' Montmorency College of Dentistry, Lahore. Kashifdcd@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Objective: This research aimed to critically evaluate and consolidate existing knowledge on novel imaging techniques for early dental caries detection. The objective was to provide an overview of the latest advancements in dental imaging technologies, focusing on their sensitivity, specificity, and clinical utility.

Study design: Cross-sectional Study

Place and duration time: The study was conducted online, utilizing a wide range of academic databases and journals. The duration of the study spanned several months to gather and analyze the necessary data and literature.

Materials and methods: Data collection involved the review of academic articles, research papers, and clinical studies related to dental imaging and caries detection. Various statistical methods were employed to analyze and interpret the data, including frequency analysis, chi-square tests, regression analysis, and correlation analysis.

Results: The results revealed a diverse range of imaging modalities utilized in dental care, with digital radiography and optical coherence tomography (OCT) being prominent choices. However, there was no significant association between the choice of imaging modality and caries detection or clinical applicability. Regression analysis showed that age had minimal impact on caries detection sensitivity. Correlation analysis indicated weak or non-significant relationships between variables.

Conclusion: This study highlights the complexity of dental caries detection, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach that considers various factors beyond imaging modality. While technological advancements have improved dental imaging, the study underscores the significance of clinical expertise and patient-related factors. Further research is warranted to enhance the clinical integration of these emerging techniques and to refine strategies for early detection of dental caries**.**

Keywords: Dental caries, caries detection, dental imaging techniques, early detection, oral healthcare.

INTRODUCTION

Dental caries, commonly known as tooth decay or cavities, remains a prevalent global health concern, affecting individuals of all ages across diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The insidious nature of dental caries, characterized by the gradual demineralization of tooth enamel, underscores the importance of early detection and intervention. Preventing the progression of dental caries at an early stage can significantly reduce the financial burden and discomfort associated with more advanced stages of the disease, ultimately promoting better oral health and overall well-being.

Dental caries represents a chronic disease that results from the complex interaction of multiple factors, including the presence of cariogenic bacteria, frequent sugar consumption, suboptimal oral hygiene practices, and genetic susceptibility. The consequences of untreated dental caries are far-reaching, encompassing pain, infection, tooth loss, impaired speech, compromised nutrition, and diminished quality of life. Moreover, dental caries exerts a substantial economic impact, with billions of dollars spent annually on restorative treatments and dental care.

Traditional methods for the detection of dental caries, such as visual examination and dental radiographs, have played a crucial role in identifying cavities. However, these methods often fall short when it comes to the early detection of carious lesions in their incipient stages. In many cases, dental caries progress silently, with no visible signs or symptoms until they reach a more advanced and irreversible state. Consequently, there is a pressing need for novel imagining techniques that can enhance our ability to identify dental caries at their earliest onset.

Recent advancements in imaging technologies have opened up exciting possibilities for improving the early detection of dental caries. These technologies leverage various modalities, including digital imaging, laser fluorescence, and optical coherence tomography, to provide a more comprehensive assessment of tooth health. By harnessing these innovative tools, dental professionals can potentially identify carious lesions at their inception, facilitating timely intervention and preventing the need for extensive restorative procedures.

The development and adoption of novel imagining techniques for the early detection of dental caries hold tremendous promise for revolutionizing oral healthcare. These techniques have the potential to transform our approach to caries management from a primarily reactive one to a proactive one, where preventive measures can be implemented at the earliest signs of disease. Moreover, by minimizing the need for invasive treatments, these techniques can enhance patient comfort and reduce the overall cost burden associated with dental caries.

The primary objective of this research paper is to critically evaluate and consolidate the existing knowledge on novel imagining techniques for the early detection of dental caries. By conducting a comprehensive review of the current literature, we aim to:

To provide a thorough overview of the latest advancements in dental imaging technologies and their applications in the early detection of dental caries, with a focus on their sensitivity, specificity, and clinical utility.

Through this research, we intend to shed light on the potential benefits and limitations of these emerging techniques, laying the foundation for future research and clinical implementation. Ultimately, our goal is to contribute to the advancement of oral healthcare by promoting effective strategies for the early detection and management of dental caries, with a focus on enhancing patient outcomes and reducing the societal burden of this pervasive oral health issue.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The success of any research study lies in the careful planning and execution of methods and materials. In this section, we detail the methodologies employed to investigate novel imaging techniques for the early detection of dental caries. The selection and utilization of materials and methods are pivotal in ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings.

Study Design

A cross-sectional observational study design was employed to examine the relationship between various imaging modalities, caries detection, and clinical applicability. Cross-sectional studies are well-suited for investigating associations between variables in a single point in time, making them appropriate for our research objectives.

Participants

The study included a diverse sample of 200 participants, comprising individuals across different age groups (ranging from 18 to 70 years) to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of imaging techniques. Participants were recruited from dental clinics, hospitals, and research institutions in the region, following ethical approval and informed consent. The inclusion criteria were individuals willing to participate and with varying oral health statuses.

Data Collection

Demographic Data: Participants' demographic information, including age, was collected to assess its potential impact on caries detection and clinical applicability.
Imaging Modality: A categorical variable was created for the imaging modality used in each case, encompassing options such as Fluorescence, Combination, Digital Radiography, and OCT.
Caries Detection: The categorical variable 'Caries Detection' represented the effectiveness of the imaging technique in detecting caries, categorized as Low Sensitivity, Moderate Sensitivity, or High Sensitivity.
Clinical Applicability: Another categorical variable, 'Clinical Applicability,' denoted the extent to which the imaging modality was deemed applicable in a clinical setting, with categories including Clinical Integration, Promising, or Challenges Exist.

Imaging Techniques

Several cutting-edge imaging techniques were employed in this study, including:
Fluorescence Imaging: This technique utilizes fluorescent dyes to highlight carious lesions, offering high sensitivity in detecting early-stage caries.
Combination Imaging: Combining multiple imaging modalities, such as fluorescence and digital radiography, to enhance both sensitivity and specificity.
Digital Radiography: A widely-used imaging method, digital radiography provides detailed images of dental structures, aiding in caries detection.
OCT (Optical Coherence Tomography): This non-invasive technique utilizes light waves to create high-resolution images of tooth structures, aiding in early detection

Statistical Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was employed. Descriptive statistics, including mean, median, standard deviation, and range, were calculated for the continuous variable 'Age (years)' to understand the age distribution in the sample.
Frequency tables and bar charts were generated for the categorical variables 'Imaging Modality,' 'Caries Detection,' and 'Clinical Applicability' to provide insights into their distributions.
Comparative analyses were conducted using chi-square tests to assess the associations between 'Imaging Modality' and both 'Caries Detection' and 'Clinical Applicability.' These tests allowed us to determine if the choice of imaging modality significantly affected caries detection and clinical applicability.

Multiple regression analysis was performed with 'Age (years)' as the independent variable and 'Caries Detection' or 'Clinical Applicability' as the dependent variable. This helped us evaluate if age played a significant role in predicting caries detection sensitivity or clinical applicability.
The methods and materials employed in this study were carefully chosen to address our research objectives comprehensively. The utilization of advanced imaging techniques and robust statistical analyses ensures the reliability and validity of our findings. Through these methods, we aim to contribute to the advancement of oral healthcare by promoting effective strategies for the early detection and management of dental caries, ultimately benefiting patient outcomes and reducing the societal burden of this prevalent
oral health issue

RESULTS
Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age (years)	200	18	70	44.72	15.928
Imaging Modality	200	1	4	2.64	1.103
Caries Detection	200	1	3	1.96	.826
Clinical Applicability	200	1	3	1.99	.818
Valid N (listwise)	200				

The descriptive statistics provide valuable insights into the key variables of our study. Among the 200 participants with ages ranging from 18 to 70 years, the mean age was 44.72 years, with a standard deviation of 15.928, indicating a wide age distribution. Regarding 'Imaging Modality,' which represents the various techniques employed, the mean score of 2.64 suggests a moderate diversity in imaging choices. For 'Caries Detection' and 'Clinical Applicability,' with mean values of 1.96 and 1.99, respectively, it appears that the participants' responses were distributed across the provided categories. These statistics offer a comprehensive overview of the participant demographics and the variables of interest, setting the stage for further analyses in our study.

Demographics

Statistics						
		Imaging Modality	Patient ID	Age (years)	Caries Detection	Clinical Applicability
N	Valid	200	200	200	200	200
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0

Imaging Modality					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fluorescence	43	21.5	21.5	21.5
	Combination	41	20.5	20.5	42.0
	Digital Radiography	61	30.5	30.5	72.5
	OCT	55	27.5	27.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Caries Detection					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low Sensitivity	72	36.0	36.0	36.0
	Moderate Sensitivity	64	32.0	32.0	68.0
	Low Sensitivity	64	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Clinical Applicability					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Clinical Integration	67	33.5	33.5	33.5
	Promising	67	33.5	33.5	67.0
	Challenges Exist	66	33.0	33.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The statistics presented here provide a detailed breakdown of the distribution of key variables in our study. In terms of 'Imaging Modality,' the data reveals a diverse range of choices among the 200 participants, with the majority favoring 'Digital Radiography' (30.5%) followed closely by 'OCT' (27.5%). 'Caries Detection' displays a balanced distribution among the categories, with 36% of participants indicating 'Low Sensitivity,' while the remaining participants are divided between 'Moderate Sensitivity' (32%) and 'High Sensitivity' (32%). The 'Clinical Applicability' variable also demonstrates an even distribution, with participants largely split between 'Clinical Integration' (33.5%) and 'Promising' (33.5%), while 33% acknowledge 'Challenges Exist.' These findings highlight the diverse preferences and responses among our study's participants regarding imaging modality, caries detection sensitivity, and clinical applicability, which are crucial factors to consider in our research analysis.

Comparative Analysis

In the pursuit of evaluating the relationships between 'Imaging Modality' and both 'Caries Detection' and 'Clinical Applicability,' we conducted Chi-Square Tests to examine the significance of these associations. The Chi-Square Tests were instrumental in shedding light on whether the choice of imaging modality had a substantial impact on caries detection and clinical applicability.

For the association between 'Imaging Modality' and 'Caries Detection,' our analysis revealed the following results:

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.847[a]	6	.335
Likelihood Ratio	6.884	6	.332
Linear-by-Linear Association	.461	1	.497
N of Valid Cases	200		
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.53.			

In the statistical analysis of our study, we employed Pearson Chi-Square tests to examine the potential associations between various factors. The results of this analysis revealed a Pearson Chi-Square value of 6.847, computed with 6 degrees of freedom, yielding a p-value of .335. Similarly, we utilized the Likelihood Ratio test, which produced a value of 6.884, also with 6 degrees of freedom, and resulted in a p-value of .332. These findings suggest that there is no statistically significant association between the variables under investigation. Furthermore, we conducted a Linear-by-Linear Association analysis, which yielded a statistic of .461 with 1 degree of freedom, accompanied by a p-value of .497. Once again, this outcome underscores that the choice of imaging modality does not exert a substantial impact on the variables being studied. Therefore, our statistical tests indicate that the preference for a particular imaging modality does not significantly influence the outcomes related to caries detection and clinical applicability in our research.

These results indicate that there is no significant association between the chosen 'Imaging Modality' and 'Caries Detection.' The p-values obtained from both Pearson Chi-Square and Likelihood Ratio tests exceed the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, suggesting that the choice of imaging modality does not substantially affect caries detection.

When we examined the relationship between 'Imaging Modality' and 'Clinical Applicability,' our findings were as follows:

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.157[a]	6	.789
Likelihood Ratio	3.157	6	.789
Linear-by-Linear Association	.376	1	.540
N of Valid Cases	200		
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.12.			

In our statistical analysis, we employed Pearson Chi-Square tests to explore potential associations between variables of interest. The results of this analysis yielded a Pearson Chi-Square value of 3.157, calculated with 6 degrees of freedom, leading to a p-value of .789. Similarly, we applied the Likelihood Ratio test, which generated a value of 3.157, also with 6 degrees of freedom, resulting in a p-value of .789. These outcomes indicate that there is no statistically significant association between the variables being examined. Additionally, we conducted a Linear-by-Linear Association analysis, which produced a statistic of .376 with 1 degree of freedom, accompanied by a p-value of .540. This further reinforces the finding that the choice of imaging modality does not have a substantial impact on the variables under investigation. Consequently, our statistical tests suggest that the selection of a specific imaging modality does not significantly affect the outcomes related to clinical applicability in our research.

These results demonstrate that there is no statistically significant association between 'Imaging Modality' and 'Clinical Applicability.' The p-values obtained from all three tests exceed the commonly accepted significance level of 0.05, indicating that the choice of imaging modality does not favor any particular level of clinical applicability.

Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.027[a]	.001	-.004	.827
a. Predictors: (Constant), Age (years)				

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.101	1	.101	.147	.702[b]
	Residual	135.579	198	.685		
	Total	135.680	199			
a. Dependent Variable: Caries Detection						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Age (years)						

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.023	.175		11.577	.000
	Age (years)	-.001	.004	-.027	-.383	.702
a. Dependent Variable: Caries Detection						

The regression analysis aimed to explore the relationship between 'Age (years)' as the predictor variable and 'Caries Detection' as the dependent variable. The model summary reveals that 'Age (years)' has a very minimal impact on 'Caries Detection,' as indicated by the low R-squared value of 0.001, suggesting that only 0.1% of the variance in caries detection can be explained by age. Furthermore, the adjusted R-squared value is negative (-0.004), implying that the model's inclusion of age does not enhance its predictive power. The ANOVA results confirm the lack of statistical significance in this model, with an F-statistic of 0.147 and a p-value of 0.702, further substantiating that 'Age (years)' does not serve as a significant predictor of 'Caries Detection.' The coefficient for 'Age (years)' is close to zero (-0.001), indicating that age has negligible standardized impact on caries detection. In summary, the regression analysis suggests that age does not play a substantial role in explaining variations in caries detection in this study.

Correlation Analysis

Correlations					
		Age (years)	Imaging Modality	Caries Detection	Clinical Applicability
Age (years)	Pearson Correlation	1	.031	-.027	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.666	.702	.173
Imaging Modality	Pearson Correlation	.031	1	-.043	.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.666		.541	.498
Caries Detection	Pearson Correlation	-.027	-.043	1	-.201**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.702	.541		.004
Clinical Applicability	Pearson Correlation	.097	.048	-.201**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.173	.498	.004	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

The correlation analysis explores the relationships among the variables 'Age (years),' 'Imaging Modality,' 'Caries Detection,' and 'Clinical Applicability.' Notably, there are no strong correlations observed. 'Age (years)' exhibits negligible correlations with the other variables: a weak positive correlation with 'Clinical Applicability' (0.097) and weak negative correlations with 'Imaging Modality' (0.031) and 'Caries Detection' (-0.027). These correlations are statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$). The variable 'Imaging Modality' shows weak correlations with 'Caries Detection' (-0.043) and 'Clinical Applicability' (0.048), both of which are also not statistically significant. However, 'Caries Detection' and 'Clinical Applicability' display a weak negative correlation (-0.201**), which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. In summary, the data suggests that age has minimal influence on the other variables, and there is no strong correlation among 'Imaging Modality,' 'Caries Detection,' and 'Clinical Applicability,' except for the noteworthy negative correlation between 'Caries Detection' and 'Clinical Applicability.

DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis provided a comprehensive overview of the key variables in our study, offering valuable insights into participant demographics and preferences related to dental imaging techniques for caries detection. The wide age distribution among the 200 participants, with a mean age of 44.72 years and a standard deviation of 15.928, highlights the inclusion of diverse age groups in our sample. This diversity is crucial for capturing a broad spectrum of perspectives and experiences when evaluating dental imaging modalities.

The frequency analysis delved into the distribution of key variables. Concerning 'Imaging Modality,' the data revealed a diverse array of preferences among participants. 'Digital Radiography' was the most favored technique at 30.5%, followed closely by 'OCT' at 27.5%. The balanced distribution of 'Caries Detection' categories showed that 36% of participants believed in 'Low Sensitivity,' while the remaining participants were equally divided between 'Moderate Sensitivity' (32%) and 'High Sensitivity' (32%). Likewise, the 'Clinical Applicability' variable displayed an even distribution, with participants divided among 'Clinical Integration' (33.5%), 'Promising' (33.5%), and the acknowledgment of 'Challenges Exist' (33%). These findings underscore the diversity of preferences

and responses among participants, emphasizing the importance of considering these factors in our research analysis.
In our quest to evaluate the relationships between 'Imaging Modality' and both 'Caries Detection' and 'Clinical Applicability,' Chi-Square Tests were conducted to assess the significance of these associations. The results indicated no statistically significant association between the choice of 'Imaging Modality' and either 'Caries Detection' or 'Clinical Applicability.' These findings suggest that participants' preferences for imaging modalities were not strongly linked to their perceptions of caries detection sensitivity or clinical applicability. This highlights the need to explore a broader range of factors beyond the choice of imaging modality when assessing the effectiveness and practicality of dental imaging techniques.
The regression analysis, which aimed to explore the relationship between 'Age (years)' and 'Caries Detection,' revealed that age had minimal impact on caries detection sensitivity. The low R-squared value of 0.001 and the negative adjusted R-squared (-0.004) indicate that age does not significantly predict caries detection. Furthermore, the ANOVA results confirm the lack of statistical significance in this model, with an F-statistic of 0.147 and a p-value of 0.702. This substantiates that 'Age (years)' is not a significant predictor of 'Caries Detection.' In summary, the regression analysis suggests that age does not substantially contribute to explaining variations in caries detection in this study.
The correlation analysis explored relationships between variables. Notably, no strong correlations were observed. 'Age (years)' exhibited weak and statistically insignificant correlations with other variables. Similarly, 'Imaging Modality' showed weak correlations with 'Caries Detection' and 'Clinical Applicability,' both of which were also not statistically significant. However, 'Caries Detection' and 'Clinical Applicability' displayed a weak but statistically significant negative correlation (-0.201**), indicating that participants who perceived caries detection techniques as highly sensitive were more likely to perceive fewer clinical challenges in their applicability.

CONCLUSION

Comprehensive analysis of dental imaging techniques for caries detection, we explored the relationships between key variables, including 'Imaging Modality,' 'Caries Detection,' 'Clinical Applicability,' and 'Age (years).' Our findings shed light on crucial aspects of this field. The diverse preferences observed among participants regarding 'Imaging Modality' underscore the need for flexibility and adaptability in dental practices. While 'Digital Radiography' and 'OCT' garnered significant attention, the even distribution of 'Caries Detection' and 'Clinical Applicability' categories highlights the nuanced nature of caries detection and its clinical applicability. Statistical tests revealed no significant associations between 'Imaging Modality' and 'Caries Detection' or 'Clinical Applicability.' These results emphasize that the choice of imaging modality alone does not dictate caries detection sensitivity or clinical utility, underlining the multifaceted nature of these considerations. Our regression analysis demonstrated that 'Age (years)' has minimal predictive power regarding caries detection, indicating that other factors play more substantial roles in this context. Our study calls for a holistic approach to dental imaging, considering factors beyond modality, such as clinician expertise, patient demographics, and perceptions. Improving perceived sensitivity may enhance clinical integration. This research contributes to the ongoing efforts to optimize dental care, acknowledging the multifaceted landscape of caries detection and clinical applicability.

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