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ABSTRACT

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CHARACTERISTICS OF THERMOPLASTIC POLYMER DENTURE BASE MATERIALS FOR PROSTHODONTIC CONSTRUCTIONS

Introduction. In dentistry, there is a wide range of thermoplastic polymers for the removable constructions of dental prostheses, which are extremely promising in modern dental practice. Successful prosthetics of patients will depend on the properties of the selected structural materials.. Purpose of the study was to summarize current information, based on a review of literary sources, on the use of thermoplastic base materials for the manufacture of removable prostheses and improves the effectiveness of orthopedic treatment of patients with complete or partial absence of teeth.

Methods. A literature review was conducted using PubMed, Web of Science, SCOPUS, Google Scholar up to January 2024. There was no restriction on the date of publication or language. Searches using the MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) terms were conducted using synonyms and combinations of the following search terms: "removable prosthetics", "dental base materials", "thermoplastics" "materials science", and "adaptation". Used methods: bibliographic and analytical.

Results. Thermoplastic materials are characterized by bioinertness for the organism, because they do not contain residual monomer. The technology of injection molding of thermoplastic polymers is considered as a promising technology in modern dentistry to achieve high aesthetic standards. The general characteristic of this group of materials is the absence of residual monomer and, accordingly, their biological indifference, a high level of plasticity, precision during the manufacture of the prosthesis, and a wide range of colours.

Conclusion. Polymer denture base plastics do not have optimal physico-mechanical, biological and surface characteristics, so the search for new materials for the manufacture of removable prostheses remains a promising direction.

Key words: removable prosthetics, dental base materials, thermoplastics, mucous membrane, materials science, nylon prosthesis, acetate prosthesis, acrylic prosthesis, prosthetic dentistry, adaptation.

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ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА ТЕРМОПЛАСТИЧНИХ ПОЛІМЕРНИХ БАЗИСНИХ МАТЕРІАЛІВ ДЛЯ ОРТОПЕДИЧНИХ ЗУБНИХ ПРОТЕЗНИХ КОНСТРУКЦІЙ

Вступ. В даний час в стоматології існує широкий асортимент термопластичних полімерів для знімних конструкцій зубних протезів, які надзвичайно перспективні у сучасній стоматологічній практиці. Успішне протезування пацієнтів залежатиме від властивостей вибраних конструкційних матеріалів. Метою даної роботи було на основі огляду літературних джерел узагальнити сучасні відомості про застосування термопластичних базисних матеріалів для виготовлення знімних протезів і підвищення ефективності ортопедичного лікування пацієнтів з повним або частковим відсутністю зубів.

Методи. Огляд літератури проводився за допомогою PubMed, Web of Science, SCOPUS, Google Scholar до січня 2024 року. Не було обмежень щодо дати публікації чи мови наукових джерел. Пошуки проводилися за термінами MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) з використанням таких пошукових термінів: «знімне протезування», «знімні протези», «стоматологічні базисні матеріали», «термопласти», «матеріалознавство», «адаптація». Використані методи: бібліографічний та аналітичний.

Результати та їх обговорення. Термопластичні матеріали характеризуються біоінертністю для організму людини, тому що не містять залишковий мономер. Ця група матеріалів володіє хорошою міцністю, гнучкістю, стійкістю до зовнішніх впливів, легкістю, еластичністю і високою естетичністю. Технологія інжекційного формування термопластичних полімерів дійсно розглядається як перспективний метод у сучасній стоматології для досягнення високих естетичних стандартів. Ця група матеріалів відрізняється відсутністю залишкового мономера, що забезпечує їх біологічну безпеку, а також високим рівнем пластичності, точністю виготовлення протезів та широкою кольоровою гамою. Завдяки позитивним характеристикам сучасних термопластичних полімерів стало можливим виготовляти ортопедичні конструкції з високими естетичними та функціональними властивостями, які характеризуються еластичністю, легкістю та комфортом.

Висновок. Полімерні базисні пластмаси також не мають оптимальних фізико-механічних, біологічних і поверхневих характеристик, тому перспективним напрямом залишається пошук нових матеріалів для виготовлення знімних протезів.

Ключові слова: знімне протезування, базисні матеріали, термопласти, слизова оболонка, матеріалознавство, нейлоновий протез, ацетатний протез, акриловий протез, ортопедична стоматологія, адаптація.

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ABBREVIATIONS

MeSH – Medical Subject Headings

PEEK – polyetheretherketones

INTRODUCTION / ВСТУП

In recent years a significant number of measures have been implemented to prevent the development of dental diseases. Despite these efforts, the prevalence of such diseases among the population remains high [1]. And, as a result, the need of patients for orthopedic treatment with partial or complete removable prostheses is increasing [2]. Everyone knows that untimely referral of patients to the imperfect materials and technologies in the manufacture of removable structures of dental prostheses lead to deterioration of the condition of the entire dental and jaw system and the organism as a whole [3, 4]. Currently, in dentistry there is a wide range of thermoplastic polymers for removable structures of dental prostheses, which are extremely promising in modern dental practice [5]. Thermoplastic materials are characterized by bioinertness for the human body, because they do not contain residual monomer. This group of materials has good strength, flexibility, resistance to external influences, lightness, elasticity and high aesthetics [6].

However, the experience of using thermoplastic polymers for the bases of removable prostheses has shown that, along with positive properties, there are also technological shortcomings that affect the quality and durability of these prosthetic constructions. Basically, it is the complexity of polishing thermoplastics, which leads to the rapid deterioration of the aesthetic characteristics of the removable prosthesis, the accumulation of microorganisms on its surface [7]. This leads to the complexity of wide practical implementation of these types of promising basic materials.

In the exploration of dental base materials, various testing methods are employed to examine their properties in detail. This includes investigating their dependence on chemical composition, structure, and processing methods. The success of patient prosthetics hinges on the properties of the chosen structural materials [8].

Purpose of the study was to summarize current information, based on a review of literary sources, on the use of thermoplastic base materials for the manufacture of removable prostheses and improves the

effectiveness of orthopedic treatment of patients with complete or partial absence of teeth.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The literature review is based on the analysis of a significant volume of digital publications, which were found as a result of a literature search on global databases, such as PubMed (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>), Web of Science Core Collection (<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/basic-search>), Scopus (<https://www.scopus.com>) and Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com.ua>). A literature review was carried out to identify publications about the influence of orthopedic structures made of various materials on the homeostasis of the oral cavity, as well as the importance of changes in the of the oral cavity's homeostasis on adaptation to dental prostheses. The bibliographic research was conducted between 20 August 2023 and 20 January 2024 to analyze the most recent evidence. Searches using the MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) terms were conducted using synonyms and combinations of the following search terms: "removable prosthetics", "dental base materials", "thermoplastics" "materials science", and "adaptation". In addition to the electronic search, an analogical search was carried out in the bibliographic references of the selected articles. Used methods: bibliographic and analytical. At the first stage, a search for literary sources was conducted using key words. At the second stage, summaries of articles were studied and publications that did not meet the research criteria were excluded. At the third stage, the full texts of the selected articles were studied for compliance with the criteria for inclusion in the literature list and research relevance. The criteria for including publications in the sample that was subject to content analysis were the following: 1) coverage of modern information on the use of thermoplastic polymer base materials in the manufacture of removable prostheses; 2) compliance of research with the key principles of evidence-based medicine; 3) full-text indexing of the article in the PubMed scientometric database. Exclusion criteria were publications that did not meet the purpose of this review, results, publication language other than English and Ukrainian.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 89 sources of literature were selected and processed during the primary analysis, which included evidence-based randomized trials, systematic reviews, and others. After further systematization of the selected information using general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, generalization, critical evaluation of the collected data), 60 most relevant sources remained. Currently, due to the introduction of current technologies in prosthetics with removable structures, the opportunities to raise and improve the quality of treatment with the help of removable dental prostheses have significantly expanded [9]. Many specialists, striving for the best, begin to gradually abandon the technology of hot hardening, compression molding, which is widespread, and move to a new level of dental production [10].

Thermoplastic polymers have become known in world dentistry since the middle of the last century, but the interest of domestic dentists and dental technicians in them arose in the last 10-15 years, due to the emergence of available information and equipment [11]. At that time, there were attempts to use different combinations of materials to obtain the bases of prostheses: based on polycarbonate, polyamides, polystyrene, which never found their use in dentistry.

Thermoplastic polymers can acquire plasticity and the required shape in a heated state. At the same time, in granular or powder form, the polymer enters the injection cylinder of the casting apparatus, where it warms up, plasticizes and enters the casting mold through the nozzle [12]. The technology of injection molding of thermoplastic polymers is considered as a promising technology in modern dentistry to achieve high aesthetic standards [13]. The general characteristic of this group of materials is the absence of residual monomer and, accordingly, their biological indifference, a high level of plasticity, precision during the manufacture of the prosthesis, and a wide range of colours. Thanks to the positive characteristics of modern thermoplastic polymers, it has become possible to manufacture orthopedic structures with high aesthetic and functional properties [5], which are characterized by elasticity, lightness and comfort [14].

It was proven that thermoplastic materials do not contain residual monomer, toxic and allergenic components. These polymer materials have good biocompatibility, which is very important for people with an allergic status, pathology of the gastrointestinal tract, diseases of the nervous and endocrine systems [6]. In addition, thermoplastic plastics are characterized by pronounced plasticity, unique shape memory, a large selection of colors, which makes it possible to expand the choice of partial and full prosthetics, the

manufacture of immediate prostheses, prosthetic splint-dentures, splinting and improve their aesthetic qualities [15, 16].

Since the 80s of the last century, biologically neutral thermoplastic materials, which were previously used in other fields of medicine, began to be used in the manufacture of dental prostheses. These include nylon, polyoxymethylene, polypropylene, ethylene vinyl acetate, methyl methacrylate.

As a result of research by clinicians [17], it was found that the use of elastic base polymers, which absorb chewing pressure, leads to a decrease in resorption and atrophy of the alveolar bone of the jaws. Additionally, there is a reduction in the period of adaptation to dental prostheses [18].

Ongoing research aims to enhance the aesthetics and comfort of removable medical devices and prostheses [19]. One of such works is wide and mass advertising and informing the population about the properties of prostheses based on nylon, the physical properties of which are superior to the properties of some metals [20]. They are manufactured using the injection method, so they have an accurate fit and stable fixation [21]. They have high strength, medium hardness, resistance to high temperatures and chemicals [22]. Nylon removable prostheses have high flexibility, resist fractures well. Prostheses made of nylon are more comfortable and natural in the oral cavity of patients, invisible to others, due to good retention and aesthetic properties [23]. To create aesthetic prostheses, a stable dye is added to the composition of thermoplastics.

Nylons represent characteristic groups of amides, leading to the classification of such compounds as polyamides. The polar nature of amide groups allows them to form strong hydrogen bonds with each other [24]. Good physical and mechanical characteristics are achieved due to the high crystallinity of polyamides [17]. Basic thermoplastic polymers based on nylon in orthopedic dentistry are a material with very good properties in terms of physical and aesthetic parameters [25].

The elasticity of these prostheses allows for cushioning and leveling of the load on the supporting teeth and on the upper and lower jaw, which provides an even and desirable distribution of chewing pressure. The positive qualities of such removable prostheses are the fixing elements in the form of elastic nylon clasps, which have good aesthetic characteristics, do not adversely affect the surface of the supporting tooth, gently covering it [26]. According to the fastening mechanism, clasps can be classified as alveolar-dental, which redistribute the load on the supporting teeth and the alveolar part [27]. Fixation of nylon prostheses allows for an even distribution of chewing pressure, so

they are applicable in patients with periodontal disease [28-30]. Adaptation of patients to nylon prostheses occurs more easily and in a short time [31].

Compared to acrylic prostheses, nylon structures are many times stronger and safer [32]. According to its properties, the nylon prosthesis surpasses all materials available on the dental market. Nylon prostheses do not cause allergic reactions, as they do not contain monomer, do not change colour [33]. Patients who used both nylon and acrylic dental prostheses note that nylon prostheses are more comfortable, more natural and invisible to others due to their aesthetics [34]. These prostheses are very light and do not injure the gums.

Removable prostheses with a base and splinting multi-link clasp, combined, partial removable prostheses with alveolar clasps are obtained from nylon [35]. According to the authors, these prostheses are easy to grind and polish, which significantly reduces the work time of the dentist and dental technician [23]. After 6 months when using prostheses, the preservation of the thermoplastic colour was noted, since due to its high density, the material is practically non-hygroscopic and does not absorb moisture [25]. It was also noted the full compliance of the base with the prosthetic bed, good fixation of the structure, and the absence of inflammatory phenomena on the part of the oral mucosa [36-39].

A positive characteristic is the absence of porosity, properties of moisture saturation, therefore, after several years; such a structure does not change and does not adsorb colonies of microorganisms [40, 41]. Unlike acrylic prostheses, nylon prostheses have a positive effect on the criteria of microbiological and non-specific resistance of tissues and organs of the oral cavity [42]. Also, nylon prostheses have become an ambiguous option for acrylic and bugel dentures.

But nylon-based removable dentures are not without drawbacks. Some dentists have found disadvantages of removable prostheses constructions based on nylon materials, namely: 1) complexity in manufacturing and final processing; 2) the elasticity and flexibility of the denture causes accelerated atrophy of the alveolar ridge; 3) difficulties in repairing or the impossibility of rebasing a nylon prosthesis; 4) impossibility of using traditional methods of cleaning nylon prostheses; 5) fixation of the prosthesis gradually deteriorates due to flexible clasps [5].

During the final treatment of dental nylon prosthesis with paste or a hard brush, scratches remain on it, which contribute to the accumulation of microorganisms on the surfaces of dental prostheses [43]. To care for nylon prosthesis, it is necessary to use special products and soft brushes, because when cleaning with ordinary hygiene products, scratches are quickly formed on it,

which contributes to the rapid accumulation of plaque on the prosthesis. After one year of using nylon prostheses, patients complained of a feeling of strong pressure in the area of the abutment teeth. In connection with the above-mentioned disadvantages of nylon prostheses, it is recommended to use them as temporary structures [14].

The most common nylon-based materials are: "Valplast", "Flexite" (USA), Israel ("Flexy-Nylon"), San Marino ("T.S.M. Acetal Dental"), Singapore ("Vertex Thermosens"), "Flexyplast" (Germany) [44].

In 1992, the Ukrainian scientist Vares E. Ya. proposed a method of casting under pressure to obtain the bases of dental appliances and prostheses. For this, foundry thermoplastic polymers polyethylene and polypropylene were taken. Propylene is a colorless polymer with no taste and characteristic smell. Constructions from this polymer had relatively good wear resistance compared to constructions from polyamides. Abrasion resistance increases with an increase in molecular weight and depends little on the content of polypropylene fractions and other structures [45].

Polypropylene is similar to nylon in its main properties, but differs in important physicochemical parameters, so polypropylene is used as a cheap alternative to nylon for the manufacture of orthopedic constructions [46]. It is a colorless polymer, without a characteristic smell and taste, it is much stronger than acrylates, softens at high temperatures, and has a high accuracy of fit. Polypropylene-based thermoplastic materials include "Proflex Clear Wire" (Dental Resources, USA), "Ndflex" (New Dental, Ukraine). Polypropylene prostheses are biologically neutral and stable in the oral environment due to the absence of monomers, catalysts, and other reactive inclusions [47]. Based on polypropylene "Lipol" was developed and widely used by professor E. Ya. Vares (Ukraine). This material was studied at the Lviv Polytechnic University.

The group of thermoplastics includes materials based on polyoxymethylene (polyformaldehyde, polymethylene oxide), which make it possible to manufacture many types of orthopedic constructions, the strength of which can be compared with metal ones [32].

Acetals are thermoplastic materials based on polyoxymethylene are the most stable thermoplastics. They have a crystalline molecular structure and the strength limit is ten times higher than the strength limit of acrylic polymer. It is believed that according to their physical and mechanical characteristics, they can be considered as a metal substitute [48]. It is known that due to the elasticity of the material, a more accurate and tight fit to the teeth and a more reliable fixation of the

prosthesis is ensured. Currently, thermoplastics based on polyoxymethylene are produced: "Aceplast" (Israel), "Dental D" (Italy), "T.S.M. Acetal Dental" (San Marino) and others [49]. Manufactured removable prostheses made of polyoxymethylene differ from other thermoplastics in greater rigidity, the least shrinkage during processing, resistance to solvents and surpass other thermoplastic polymers in dimensional stability, strength and rigidity. Due to its hardness, resistance to organic solvents and high melting point, polyoxymethylene is widely used for foundry molding [50].

Polymers, which included polyamides, had great strength, but, despite this, they turned out to be unsuitable for the technology of the base of dental prostheses, due to high water absorption, complex technical connection of it with artificial teeth, and high shrinkage [51].

In recent years, thermoplastic polymers based on methyl methacrylate have been widely used in orthopedic dentistry. The main properties of these materials include the absence of free monomer in their composition, high strength, and aesthetics [52]. This allows for the manufacturing of particularly thin bases for partial and complete removable prostheses without the need for metal structures, including saddles for buckled prostheses. Examples of monomer-free materials based on acrylic polymers are: "Flexite M.R." (USA), "Asru-free" (Israel), "The.r.mo Free" (San Marino), "Fusicril" (Italy), "Polyan" (Germany).

The least studied, but promising group of thermoplastic materials are polyetheretherketones (PEEK), which began to be used in dentistry only in recent years. These materials have a number of positive properties that determine their use in the manufacture of dental prostheses [53].

Polyetheretherketone is a semi-crystalline polymer composed of recurring units comprising three phenolic rings, two ester groups, and one keto group [54]. It exhibits a distinct set of characteristics and is recognized for its hard, opaque grayish-white appearance. Notably, among thermoplastic materials, PEEK boasts the highest melting point, reaching 335°C.

In terms of steam resistance, PEEK surpasses the rest of thermoplastics: products made from it can withstand short-term exposure in a steam atmosphere with a temperature of 300°C [55].

In the last decade, PEEK has found application in dentistry because it has a number of advantages compared to other polymers, metal alloys and ceramic restorations. PEEK is a bioinert material; its mechanical properties are similar to those of bone, dentin, and enamel. This polymer can be used in patients who refuse the presence of metals in the oral cavity due to

unaesthetic appearance, metallic taste and other reasons, as well as in people with intolerance to acrylic and metal prostheses [56].

Currently, a number of PEEK-based materials certified for medical use are produced: "PEEK-Optima", "Motis", "Endolign" and "PEEK-Classix" (Invibio), "JUVORA Dental Disc" (Juvora Invibio Ltd.), "VESTAKEEP-PEEK" (Evonik Industries AG), "Bio XS" (Bredent), "Dentokeep PEEK disc" (NT-Trading), "KetaSpire PEEK" (Solvay).

Due to its mechanical and biological properties, polyetheretherketone is a suitable material for the construction of fixed and removable dental prostheses. Despite the limited experience of using PEEK prostheses in clinical practice, they demonstrated acceptable aesthetic and functional characteristics [57].

PEEK dentures can be manufactured in two ways: using CAD/CAM systems or injection molding. According to these methods of application, PEEK is produced in the form of blocks for milling, in granular form and in the form of tablets. For the milling process using CAD/CAM technologies, PEEK blanks undergo industrial pressing under standardized conditions, such as pressure, temperature regime for the required period of time. For pressing of granulated PEEK, a preheated muffle furnace with a plunger is placed in a vacuum press [53].

Analysis of the literature shows that there is very little data on the use of PEEK as a material for the manufacture of removable prostheses [58]. Only a few groups of researchers successfully used PEEK as a material for removable prosthetics: L. S. Silva et al (2023), K. P. Parate et al. (2023) [59, 60].

PEEK prosthesis is lighter than cobalt-chromium prosthesis and has no metal parts, which is acceptable to patients. There is also the potential to create smaller, more hygienic prostheses that allow reducing the area covered by the mucous membrane [54]. PEEK has greater flexibility compared to cobalt-chromium alloys, which create high stress due to the stiffness of the material [55]. The flexibility of PEEK will reduce the load on the supporting teeth. This allows you to avoid the main disadvantages when using metals as clasps of dental prostheses and prevent fatigue failure [58].

The main disadvantages of PEEK prostheses are gray color and opacity, which limits its use. Therefore, in order to improve its aesthetic qualities, manufacturers recommend lining it with various polymer composites. However, the inert and hydrophobic surface of PEEK impairs its connection with other dental materials [55].

For the connection of PEEK with acrylic plastic and artificial teeth, the most suitable method is mechanical retention due to the creation of through holes on the base of the artificial tooth or thin grooves along the edge

of the acrylic base, because the adhesion indicators between thermoplastic materials and acrylic teeth are quite low [52].

In addition, optimal ways of connecting PEEK with other structural materials have not yet been found.

CONCLUSIONS / ВИСНОВКИ

At the moment, there is a wide range of basic materials, but the fact that not all of them have stood the test of time, and some of them need improvement, is evidence of the need for efforts by finding new

Further laboratory and clinical studies covering all aspects of the material's properties and clinical applications are needed in order for its use is based on sound scientific evidence.

thermoplastics and optimizing their manufacturing technology. No polymer has optimal physico-mechanical, biological and surface characteristics, so the search for new materials for the manufacture of removable prostheses remains a promising direction.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS / ВКЛАД АВТОРІВ

All authors substantively contributed to the drafting of the initial and revised versions of this paper. They take full responsibility for the integrity of all aspects of the work.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST / КОНФЛІКТ ІНТЕРЕСІВ

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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