

# Endodontic Spotlight

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## Introduction

I hope everyone is enjoying the gradually improving weather and longer days. Now that we've finished our mini-series on endodontic anatomy and have seen just how complicated the root canal system can be, let's see if operator experience and training makes a difference in success rates. While I realize that highlighting this study is somewhat self-serving, it is an important one to remember when deciding to treat or refer, and can help demonstrate to your patient that you are putting his or her interest first.

## **Alley BS, Kitchens GG, Alley LW, Eleazer PD. A comparison of survival of teeth following endodontic treatment performed by general dentists or by specialists. Oral Sug Oral Med Oral Pathol Oral Radiol Endod 2004;98:115-8.**

The purpose of this retrospective cohort study was to compare five year survival rates of teeth endodontically treated by endodontists versus generalists. The authors performed a chart review to analyze 350 teeth treated in private practice by either endodontists or general dentists. Success was defined as tooth survival at least 5 years after root canal therapy. Although the endodontists treated more difficult teeth (i.e. they had higher percentage of molars and lower percentage of anteriors and bicuspid), the general dentists in this study did have significant experience in performing challenging endodontic cases. While the success rate was very high for both groups of providers, the endodontists had a higher success rate than the general dentists (98.1% versus 89.7%). *SUMMARY: Endodontists have a higher success rate than general dentists when performing root canal therapy.*

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