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# Managing carious lesions: Consensus recommendations on terminology

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<td>Innes, Nicola; University of Dundee, Dental School Frencken, Jo; Radboud University Medical Center, Department of Oral Global Health Bjornal, Lars Maltz, Marisa; Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Preventive and Social Dentistry Manton, David; The University of Melbourne, Melbourne Dental School Ricketts, David; Dundee Dental School, United Kingdom, Operative Dentistry, Fixed Prosthodontics and Endodontology Van Landuyt, Kirsten; Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Conservative Dentistry Banerjee, Avijit; Kings College London Dental Institute at Guys, Kings College and St. Thomas Hospitals, London. UK, Department of Conservative Dentistry Campus, Guglielmo; University of Sassari, Department of Surgery, Microsurgery and Medicine Sciences Domejean, Sophie; Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Clermont-Ferrand; Univ Clermont1 Fontana, Margherita; University of Michigan School of Dentistry, Cariology and Restorative Sciences Leal, Soraya; University of Brasilia, School of Health Science, Department of Dentistry Lo, Edward; University of Hong Kong Machiuiskiene, Vita; Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Schulte, Andreas; Universitat Witten/Herdecke Lehrstuhl und Institut fur Allgemeinmedizin und Familienmedizin, Department of Special Care Dentistry Splieth, Christian; University of Greifswald, Preventive and Pediatric Dentistry Zandona, Andrea; The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - School of Dentistry, Department of Operative Dentistry Schwendicke, Falk; Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Operative and Preventive Dentistry</td>
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Managing carious lesions: Consensus recommendations on terminology

Nicola P.T. Innes¹, Jo E. Frencken², Lars Bjørndal³, Marisa Maltz⁴, David J. Manton⁵, David Ricketts⁶, Kirsten Van Landuyt⁷, Avijit Banerjee⁸, Guglielmo Campus⁹, Sophie Doméjean¹⁰, Margherita Fontana¹¹, Soraya Leal¹², Edward Lo¹³, Vita Machiulskiene¹⁴, Andreas Schulte¹⁵, Christian Siplieth¹⁶, Andrea Zandonà¹⁷, Falk Schwendicke¹⁸

¹ Paediatric Dentistry, Dundee Dental Hospital and School, University of Dundee, Dundee, UK
² Department of Oral Function and Prosthetic Dentistry, College of Dental Sciences, Radboud University Medical Centre, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
³ Department of Cariology & Endodontics, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
⁴ Department of Preventive and Social Dentistry, Faculty of Odontology, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
⁵ Melbourne Dental School, University of Melbourne, Australia
⁶ Operative Dentistry, Fixed Prosthodontics and Endodontology, Dundee Dental Hospital and School, University of Dundee, Dundee, UK
⁷ KULeuven BIOMAT, Department of Oral Health Sciences, University of Leuven & Dentistry University Hospitals Leuven, Kapucijnenvoer 7, 3000 Leuven, Belgium;
⁸ Conservative & MI Dentistry, King’s College London Dental Institute, Floor 26, Tower Wing, Guy’s Dental Hospital, London Bridge, London, SE1 9RT, UK.
⁹ Department of Surgery, Microsurgery and Medicine Sciences, School of Dentistry, University of Sassari, Italy, WHO Collaborating Centre for Epidemiology and Community Dentistry, University of Milan, Italy
¹⁰ CHU Clermont-Ferrand, Service d’Odontologie, Hôtel-Dieu, F-63001; Univ Clermont1, UFR d’Odontologie; Centre de Recherche en Odontologie Clinique EA 4847, F-63000 Clermont-Ferrand, France.
¹¹ Department of Cariology, Restorative Sciences and Endodontics, School of Dentistry, University of Michigan; Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA
¹² Department of Dentistry, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Brasilia, Brazil
¹³ Faculty of Dentistry, University of Hong Kong
¹⁴ Department of Dental and Oral Pathology, Faculty of Odontology, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania
¹⁵ Department of Special Care Dentistry, Faculty of Health, University of Witten/Herdecke, Witten, Germany
¹⁶ Preventive & Pediatric Dentistry, University of Greifswald, Greifswald, Germany
¹⁷ Department of Operative Dentistry, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Dentistry, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA
Department of Operative and Preventive Dentistry, Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany

Running title: Recommendations on terminology for carious tissue removal and caries management

Corresponding author: Prof. Nicola Innes
Paediatric Dentistry
Dundee Dental Hospital and School, University of Dundee, Park Place, Dundee, UK
DD1 4HN
Tel.: +44 (0)1382 381631
Email: n.p.innes@dundee.ac.uk
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Keywords: dental caries; excavation; minimally invasive dentistry; caries management
Introduction

The International Caries Consensus Collaboration (ICCC), a group of 21 cariology experts from 12 countries, met in Leuven, Belgium in February 2015 to discuss issues of relevance to cariology researchers, dental educators and the clinical dentistry community. The goal was to reach consensus on recommendations for managing carious lesions and the terminology around this management, based on the best current scientific evidence, through discussion and then consultation. In 2004, a series of papers related to the outcomes of an International Consensus Workshop on Caries Clinical Trials (Pitts and Stamm 2004) were published, their first goal being to "critically review modern caries definitions and measurement concepts". Definitions, concepts and terminology as well as evidence to support newer approaches for treating carious lesions, have advanced since then, and the ICCC felt there was a need to clarify them based on available contemporary evidence and expertise.

Dental caries is the name of a disease where an ecologic shift within the dental biofilm environment, driven by frequent access to fermentable dietary carbohydrates, leads to a move from a balanced population of micro-organisms (of low cariogenicity) to a high cariogenic (more aciduric and acidogenic) microbiological population and to an increased production of organic acids. This promotes dental hard tissue net mineral loss and results in a carious lesion (Fejerskov et al. 2008).

This report from the ICCC, deals with the terminology around carious tissue removal, lays out the background to the issues around terminology including a scoping review, and the initial areas that were agreed to allow progression through the topic. We suggest a suite of terms and definitions, based on current procedures and best evidence, explaining how these decisions were made. The report defines generic dental caries terms (Table 1) where there has been confusion, under the groupings of:

1) No removal of carious tissue;
2) Selective removal;
3) Stepwise removal; and
4) Non-selective removal of carious tissue.

One further aim is to make the nomenclature as future proof as possible by taking into account the direction in which cariology is moving.

Background

150 years ago complete removal of all traces of carious tooth tissue within a carious lesion was considered the gold standard, with the added “extension for prevention” tenet being
invoked to ensure that restoration margins were placed on areas of the tooth that are less vulnerable to caries. Advances in the field of cariology regarding the biofilm, together with improvement in materials, have challenged this perspective. There has been an evolution, gathering increasing speed over recent decades, away from removing all signs of carious tissue in a tooth, towards a more minimally invasive approach (Elderton 1993; Frencken et al. 2012; Banerjee and Domejean 2013). Indeed, the paradigm shift in carious lesion treatment, where it is appreciated that only infected and not affected dentine requires removal (Fusayama 1997) has occurred. Choices for managing a carious lesion cover a spectrum of options from complete surgical excision, where no part of the visible carious tissue is left in the tooth before a restoration is placed, to the opposite extreme, removing none of the carious tissue at all, and using non-invasive methods to prevent progression of the lesion (Ricketts et al. 2013; Green et al. 2015).

The alternatives to 'conventional complete caries removal' have been tested by different research groups over the last few decades through clinical trials and have been adopted, to varying degrees, as standard treatment by dental schools and clinicians in many countries (Innes et al. 2013; Frencken 2014; Kidd et al. 2015). However, there is inconsistency in the terminology for, and definitions that lie behind these approaches. These inconsistencies have developed naturally alongside the investigation of new interventions, and as a result of different research groups describing and naming interventions as they have been investigated. As is common in evolving fields of research, some of this research has taken place in parallel. Partly because of the sensitive nature of research development, but also simply as a result of a scarcity of opportunity for discussion, different terms have evolved. The lack of overt and planned communication within the research, teaching and clinical practice communities has resulted in some of the variations now seen in use of terminology and procedural definitions. For some procedures that seem to be very similar from the descriptions in research papers, different groups use distinctly different names. One particular definition of a procedure can have several names; for example, Franzon et al. (2014) used the term “one-step excavation” to describe an end result similar to that of Hesse’s partial caries removal with “Excavation … [to] … hardened, dried dentin with a leathery consistency” (Hesse et al. 2011). Groups that work together may know what they are referring to, but the wider audiences can misinterpret what is being said – especially where a single word is used to designate a procedure, without further opportunity to describe what is being meant. Conversely, but leading to equally confusing scenarios, for procedures which seem to differ from their descriptions, the same name, or similar ones are used by different groups. So one name holds a variety of definitions. For example, with selective caries removal, Maltz et al. (2012) describes this as “Partial removal of the soft carious tissue from the cavity floor by hand excavator (only disorganized dentine was removed)”
whereas Hesse and co-workers (2014), in their protocol step that involves partial caries removal states that the “caries lesion [was] completely removed in the enamel/dentin junction, and dentinal caries lesion partially removed with hand instruments until the dentin started to become ‘firm and leathery’” and in the first stage of stepwise caries removal Bjørndal et al. (2010) talk about “removal of the superficial necrotic and demineralized dentin with complete excavation of the peripheral demineralized dentin, avoiding excavation close to the pulp. When a temporary restoration could be properly placed no further excavation was carried out, leaving soft, wet, and discoloured dentin centrally on the pulpal wall”.

To communicate successfully and concisely, researchers, clinicians and educators need to use consistent terminology. This will help to ensure that carious tissue removal procedures are described unambiguously. One example of a very clear description of technique in a research study is found in the 10-year follow-up report of the seminal Mertz-Fairhurst and co-workers’ ultra-conservative caries removal study where there were two control groups with conventional restorations and one intervention arm where no soft dentine was removed. “... We removed all of the crumbly, opaque demineralised enamel with a bur until we reached translucent sound enamel. We did not remove undermined enamel or caries below the bevel.... [we] observed shreds of carious dentin or other material hanging below the bevel toward the soft and wet pulpal floor of the cavity. A layer of soft and wet-looking dentine in the pulpal area of the cavity remained intact, and there was absolutely no instrumentation below the enamel bevel.” (Mertz-Fairhurst et al. 1998).

Consistency, accuracy and precision are important for terminology to be used successfully, which means there has to be standardisation globally. One of the crucial aspects of this consensus work is that there is widespread dissemination and uptake, and to do this, there has to be agreement that these are acceptable terms, across a broad range of communities and groups. The cosmopolitan nature of the ICCC means that views have been represented from 12 countries. To further assist with uptake of the terminology and its dissemination, we are linking with the European Organisation for Caries Research (ORCA), the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) Cariology Group and the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) Cariology Section Sharing of expertise, experience and joining with educational forums are part of the dissemination strategy to assist the ultimate goal of uptake and use of the ICCC Terminology recommendations across the spectrum of researchers, clinicians and educators.

How much of a problem is the current terminology? (Scoping and consensus methodology)

In a methodical search for systematic reviews comparing different methods of caries removal (including partial caries removal, no caries removal etc.), seven systematic reviews were identified (Griffin et al. 2008; Thompson et al. 2008; Hayashi et al. 2011; Ferreira et al. 2012;
Rickets et al. 2013; Schwendicke et al. 2013a; Schwendicke et al. 2013b). When these, and the studies within them, were searched for the terminologies used to describe the various carious lesion management strategies, 23 terms were found. These were circulated around the ICCC group members, who were asked to contribute any further terms they knew were used and 19 further unique new terms were added. This gave a total of 42 terms (see Table 2), a large number to describe essentially four different parts of the spectrum of carious lesion removal/management.

The terms were circulated again, and this time the ICCC group was asked to choose up to six terms that they felt were most representative of the full spectrum of options for carious tissue removal. Eight different approaches to naming were returned together with comments. These provided the basis for the discussions at the consensus meeting.

**Initial areas agreed before proceeding**

**Dental caries and carious lesion**

There was full agreement that ‘dental caries’ (or simply ‘caries’) and ‘carious lesion’ were not interchangeable terms although they are often used as such.

There was consensus that dental caries (the pathological process) cannot be removed and only carious tissues can be removed. An alternative way of viewing this is to consider that the lesion can be stabilised, either by non-invasive, or by invasive means.

Although it is necessary to be exact and specify the definitions for ‘caries’ and ‘carious’, it is worth noting that, in the English language, the pronunciation of these words makes them sound almost identical. However, in other languages this may not be the case.

**Dental caries management**

The ICCC group considered two terms; “caries management” and “carious lesion management”. While the term *caries management* has been used historically in different ways, often to include the restoration of teeth, it was agreed that it should be limited to situations involving control of the disease through preventive and non-invasive means. Therefore, caries management is a term to describe the actions taken at a patient level, i.e. demineralisation and plaque/biofilm being managed not for one specific surface but for the whole person e.g. plaque control/toothbrushing instruction, fluoride application, dietary interventions and behaviour change techniques. Caries management aims to control the disease and prevent a lesion becoming clinically manifest and for those lesions detectable clinically, prevent their advancement.

What do we call the situation in which patient level *caries management* has failed? Consider two specific situations where a carious lesion needs to be managed. Firstly, an active lesion
that might require a non-invasive approach such as biofilm removal or, application of fluoride varnish to limit progression and secondly, where a lesion is not cleansable and is vulnerable to progression even in the presence of a full preventive program. In both of these cases, carious lesion management is aimed at controlling the symptoms of the disease at a tooth level. Of course, there is still a need for caries management to take place at a patient level in order to stem the source of the problem (the cause of the cause). However, for the purposes of this paper, carious lesion management means any procedure that involves doing something to an established, non-cleansable carious lesion to stop its progression. This might involve removing “none”, “some” or “all” of the carious tissues from a non-cleansable lesion.

Removal of carious tissues

The term removal was preferred to excavation, to avoid the synonymous link (in English) with hand excavation instrumentation and spoon excavators. It was agreed that the word excavation implied (albeit to a minor extent) that the process was inextricably linked to hand excavation of carious lesions, and could possibly limit the generalisability of the term.

Guiding principles of caries tissue removal

The ICCG group agreed that the primary aim of carious tissue removal is:

• To retain the tooth and the health (sensibility/vitality) of its pulp for as long as possible.

The guiding principles of carious tissue removal are:

• Preservation of dental tissues;
• Maintenance of pulpal health;
• Avoidance of pulp exposure;
• Avoidance of dental anxiety, (often considered particularly important in children but should be considered for all patients);
• Provision of sound cavity margins to achieve a peripheral seal;

Complete removal of carious tissues

Through discussion, the group became aware that the term “complete”, when referring to removal of carious tissues, held different meanings for different people. Whilst within the group, this term was considered to mean “removal until only leathery or firm dentine (resistant to hand excavator) is left pulparly”, there was still a widely held belief that many still considered it to mean “removal until only hard dentine is left pulparly”. From the systematic reviews of the literature that were evaluated, the group considered removal of carious lesion to leave only hard dentine throughout the cavity to be over-treatment and involving removal
of tooth tissue that did not need to be removed (Thompson et al. 2008; Ricketts et al. 2013; Schwendicke et al. 2013a). It was also agreed that although the words “firm” and “hard” are subjective, they may still be the best terms available.

Terminology for approaches to carious tissue removal

In describing the clinical manifestations of caries, it would be ideal to relate the visual appearance directly to what is taking place histo-pathologically (Ogawa et al. 1983; Ngo et al. 2006; Wambier et al. 2007; Chibinski et al. 2013; Corralo and Maltz 2013). However, this is not straightforward. Histo-pathological micro- and ultra-structural investigations of the relationship between the visual appearance of carious tooth tissue and parameters such as bacterial invasion, degree of demineralisation, and softness of dentine etc. have been central to developing an understanding of the caries process. One historical example of misinterpretation of histo-pathology leading to over-excavation, was the belief that early lateral spread of demineralised dentine, undermining sound subjacent enamel, led to cavitation of enamel (Silverstone and Hicks 1985). To manage this clinically, early operative intervention was suggested, including the concept of the tunnel preparation (Wilson and McLean 1988). However, more recent research has clarified the structural inter-relations confirming that the spread of contaminated dentine is a sequela of the clinically exposed dentine lesion (Bjørndal and Thylstrup, 1995; Ekstrand et al. 1998). The lateral contamination of dentine appears strictly related to stages of retrograde demineralisation of enamel (Bjørndal and Kidd 2005) i.e. demineralisation of the enamel originates at the enamel-dentinal junction as a result of bacterial metabolic activity within the dentinal lesion. Interestingly, the increasing use of clinical magnification technologies has led to these so-called ‘histo-pathological’ features being visible at the clinical level. Traditionally, these histological terms are less helpful when communicating to dentists in clinical settings and attempting to describe the degree to which carious tissues should be removed. In addition, it was felt that some of the terms such as “infected” were outdated and conveyed the idea that dental caries was a communicable disease. The terms shown in Figure 1, for the clinical (tactile) manifestations of carious dentine, were agreed and we have attempted to link the clinical consequences to the histological terms as far as possible. Table 1. expands on this by showing these agreed terms and their relationship to previously used terms.

Definitions for different clinical presentations of dentine (soft, leathery, firm and hard)

In material sciences, hardness can be characterised by the ability of a harder material to make a mark or to scratch a softer one. The force necessary to cause the scratch is also important. For practical purposes, a combination of these is probably the best way for the
clinical dentist to determine how ‘soft’ or ‘hard’ dentine is and some guidance is given below to describe the physical properties that are associated with different states of dentine.

**Soft dentine**

Soft dentine will deform when a hard instrument is pressed onto it, and can be easily scooped up (e.g. with a sharp hand excavator) with little force being required.

**Leathery dentine**

Although the dentine does not deform when an instrument is pressed onto it, leathery dentine can still be easily lifted without much force being required. There may be little difference between leathery and firm dentine with leathery being a transition on the spectrum between soft and firm dentine.

**Firm dentine**

Firm dentine is physically resistant to hand excavation and some pressure needs to be exerted through an instrument to lift it.

**Hard dentine**

A pushing force needs to be used with a hard instrument to engage the dentine and only a sharp cutting edge or a bur will lift it. A scratchy sound or ‘cri dentinai re’ can be heard when a straight probe is taken across the dentine.

**Definitions of approaches to carious tissue removal**

**Atraumatic Restorative Treatment (ART)**

ART was agreed to mean a specific technique, which encompassed a mechanism for carious lesion management using hand instruments only, through removing soft, completely demineralised enamel and dentine until firm resistance is felt (See Selective Removal of Carious Tissue below). The cavity is then restored and available pits and fissures are sealed with an adhesive dental material, usually a high-viscosity glass-ionomer cement. For deep lesions (reaching into the inner pulpal ⅓ of dentine on radiograph) some soft carious tissue should be left on the pulpal wall to avoid pulp exposure. Therefore the decision to carry out selective removal to firm dentine or to soft dentine (see later) is related to cavity depth and the possibility of pulp exposure.

**No Removal (no dentine carious tissue removal)**

There are a variety of procedures where no dentine carious tissue removal takes place. Although diverse in the methods for carrying them out, these procedures effectively serve the same purpose – to control the carious lesion without removing any of the diseased
dentine tissue. The following techniques have been included under the “No carious tissue removal” banner.

Resin or Glass Ionomer Sealant Materials

Pit and fissure therapeutic sealant materials (resin or high-viscosity glass-ionomer cements) can be placed over enamel and dentine carious lesions. However, particularly with unfilled resin, mechanical properties are limited for filling and covering micro-cavities in enamel. There are also theoretical concerns about the materials’ abilities to resist forces occlusally when there is a considerable amount of soft dentine beneath the weakened enamel (the ‘trampoline’ effect). Therefore, the extent of the lesions where these materials can be used may be limited, pending evidence, to lesions that are confined (on a radiograph) to the outer ⅓ of dentine.

The Hall Technique

This is a specific procedure for primary molars where a preformed metal (stainless steel) crown is fitted over the tooth to seal dentine carious lesions. The crown is cemented using glass ionomer cement, over a primary molar tooth and carious lesion with no tooth preparation or carious lesion removal. It is usually indicated for approximal lesions. The crown effectively seals the dentine carious lesion and slows down or prevents its progression to the dental pulp allowing the primary molar to exfoliate without pain or infection.

Non-Restorative Cavity Control

Other names for techniques (although each slightly different) that would be encompassed within this strategy include non-operative caries treatment and prevention (NOCTP) (Vermaire et al. 2014), non-restorative caries treatment (NRCT) (Lo et al. 1998; Gruythuysen 2010; Mijan et al. 2014) and slicing preparations.

This is a group of techniques that are broadly similar in that they aim to achieve arrest of a carious lesion using a package of care, through caries management at a patient level. They aim to prevent further loss of tooth tissue through caries progression in a cleansable cavity by successful instigation of an intensive preventive regimen that includes plaque removal through toothbrushing with a fluoridated toothpaste and/or application of fluoride varnish. From a carious lesion perspective, it may be necessary to alter the shape of the cavity by opening the cavity margins, to allow it to be cleansable and thus might involve some operative although not restorative intervention. These methods tend to be particularly applied to primary teeth but have a role in the permanent dentition, for example in root carious lesions.
Selective Removal of Carious Tissue

Terms used previously for non-selective and selective removal of carious tissues have commonly included; ‘complete’ and ‘incomplete’ excavation of carious lesions. These describe the result at the end of the carious tissue removal process. There are three problems with these terms:

1. The criteria that demarcate the extent to which carious tissues are removed have not been defined or agreed; should this be “free from bacteria”, “demineralised dentine”, “discoloured dentine” or “soft dentine”;?

2. There are no commonly used and easily accessible technologies available to reliably assess any of these criteria in a clinical setting, although it is acknowledged that this might change in the future; and

3. If clinical assessments are re-evaluated using more advanced techniques (measurement of bacterial load or mineral loss), based on the findings of previous research, it is most likely that areas of dentine will be found where there is incompletely removed carious tissue after attempted complete removal and vice versa.

Thus, we felt it made more sense to use procedural definitions to describe exactly what has been done instead of measuring what we attempted to achieve. Using this rationale, the group agreed on the term Selective Removal. In Selective Removal, different excavation criteria are used when assessing the periphery of the cavity to the area in close proximity to the pulp. The periphery of the cavity should be surrounded by ‘sound’ enamel to allow the best adhesive seal. The peripheral dentine should be hard – with similar tactile characteristics to sound dentine, such as a scratching noise when scraping the surface with a sharp hand excavator or dental probe. However, firm carious tissue should be left towards the pulpal aspect of the cavity, with enough of it removed to allow a durable bulk of restoration to be placed, whilst avoiding pulp exposure. For deep lesions (extending beyond the inner (pulpal) third or quarter of the dentine radiographically) Selective Removal should be to soft dentine (the main aim is not to expose or irritate the pulp, provided that there are no clinical symptoms of pulp inflammation present). For less deep lesions Selective Removal should take place to firm dentine pulpally (this is likely to be necessary to allow adequate depth for the restorative material bulk).

There were other reasons that the term Selective Removal was supported. The group agreed there was an advantage to using terms that had not yet been used in the literature. This was the case here where there were multiple terms for a single procedure used across different groups and where the definition behind them was not clear. In addition, the negative association of the terms “partial” and “incomplete”, which implied that the whole, required treatment had not been carried out and that treatment was sub-optimal, were considered
disadvantageous in supporting the procedures’ adoption and acceptance as standard techniques.

A description of these terms is found below.

**Selective Removal to Soft Dentine**

Selective Removal to Soft Dentine in deep lesions means leaving soft carious dentine in the pulpal aspect of the cavity. Peripheral enamel and dentine should be hard at the end of excavation to allow the best adhesive seal. This technique has previously been known as partial caries, one-step, ultra-conservative or incomplete caries removal. A sharp hand excavator can be used to check the softness/hardness of the remaining dentine, remembering that soft dentine will deform when an instrument is pressed onto it and little force would be required to lift it.

**Selective Removal to Firm Dentine**

In Selective Removal to Firm Dentine, the aim is to excavate to leathery or firm dentine (physically resistant to hand excavator) in the pulpal aspect of the cavity. This is the contemporary understanding of how much should be removed if the entire carious – CONTAMINATED but not the DEMINERALISED dentine, which can be remineralised, (Fig. 1) is aimed at being removed. It is acknowledged that there are not easily accessible or widely used means to tell when contaminated tissue has been removed and to determine when what is seen in the cavity is only demineralised dentine. However, although somewhat subjective, the tactile sense of reaching firm dentine on the pulpal floor rather than aiming for hard dentine is probably the best guide that can be given.

**Stepwise Removal**

Certain terms were felt to be in fairly common use, had less variability in their definition and understanding and were well accepted. It was therefore considered to be advantageous to adopt these as standard with just a clear and unambiguous explanation of the definition behind them. This was the case for Stepwise Removal (Bjørndal et al. 1997; Bjørndal and Larsen, 2000; Paddick et al. 2005).

Stepwise Removal involves “Selective Removal to Soft Dentine” at Stage 1, followed 6-12 months later by “Selective Removal to Firm Dentine” for Stage 2

Stage 1 has the same carious tissue removal aims as “Selective Removal to Soft Dentine” with completely demineralised carious tissue, still soft, being left pulpally but where there is removal of enough carious tooth tissue to place a durable restoration whilst avoiding pulp exposure. The periphery of the cavity should be hard – with similar appearance and tactile characteristics to sound dentine. A provisional restoration is placed with a restorative
material that is considered suitable to last for up to 12 months. The subsequent removal of this provisional restoration should then be followed by the “Selective Removal to Firm Dentine” pathway with placement of a definitive restoration aiming for longevity. This technique has previously been also known as “two-step excavation”.

Non-selective Removal to Hard Dentine

Non-selective Removal to Hard Dentine was formerly known as ‘complete excavation’ or ‘complete caries removal’ and is no longer recommended as an approach for carious tissue removal. It is only mentioned here for completeness. It is the approach to carious tissue removal that was accepted in the past and is now considered over-treatment. The aim was to remove soft carious tissue to reach hard dentine resembling healthy dentine in all parts of the cavity, including pulpally. For the pulpal area, Bjørndal describes ‘complete caries excavation’ as “leaving only central yellowish or greyish hard dentin (equal to the hardness of sound dentin, as judged by gentle probing).” (Bjørndal et al. 2010).

However, for deep caries lesions (reaching into the inner pulpal ⅓ of dentine on radiograph), ‘complete caries excavation’ is now considered likely to result in detriment to the tooth through exposure of the pulp, indirect damage to the pulp from irritation passing through the thin remaining dentine thickness or from weakening the tooth’s structural integrity unnecessarily (Ricketts et al. 2013; Schwendicke et al. 2013a). This approach is no longer recommended. However, for shallow carious lesions (involving the outer pulpal third of dentine on radiograph), Non-selective Removal to Hard Dentine may not be much different from Non-selective Removal to Firm Dentine.

Summary

We have presented here a comprehensive list of terms to encompass the full spectrum of carious tissue removal options following a process of consensus and consultation. However, other areas remain where there is no standardised terminology or where there are subjective terms that are commonly used such as ‘invasive’, ‘restorative’ and ‘intervention’ and we have had to resort to using some of these here and in the parallel paper to this one on recommendations for managing carious lesions (Schwendicke et al. 2016). These will perhaps form the next stage of standardisation but in the meantime there is a need to facilitate dissemination – this is an inextricable and essential component of consensus within the specialty if the advantages of the consensus terminology are to be maximised.

Declaration of Interests

The corresponding author formally requested a declaration of possible conflicts of interest from each of the consensus conference members. We declare there were no commercial conflicts of interest within the consensus process and writing of this document and no
companies or their members participated in the process or saw the manuscript before finalisation. For the purposes of transparency we have listed a comprehensive declaration of interests: AS – none; AZ – paid lectures, ICDAS Foundation member; AB – commercial grant: GSK, 3MESPE, paid lectures: 3MESPE, GC, Septodont, Colgate, OralB; CS – none; DM – commercial grants: GC, paid lectures: GC, DMG; DR – none; EL – none; FS – commercial grant: DMG, GC, paid lectures and consultancy work: DMG; GC – none; JF – paid lectures: 3MESPE India and GC America; KvL – none; LB – none; MF – none; MM – none; NI – commercial grant: 3MESPE (2001), paid lectures: 3MESPE, Colgate; SD – none; SL – paid lectures: GC; VM – none.

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Authors contribution

Initiated and organized the consensus process: JF, FS, NI
Prepared abstracts for the meeting and held presentations: LB, MM, DM, DR, KvL, FS
Contributed to the workshop and the consensus process before and after the workshop: all authors.
Wrote the initial draft of the manuscript: NI, JF, FS
Read, amendeand approved the manuscript: all authors.
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lesions by complete excavation or partial removal A critical review. J Am Dent Assoc.

Ultrastructural and microbiological analysis of the dentin layers affected by caries lesions in

Company. p. 179-220.
Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of the carious lesion (after Ogawa et al. 1983)

Dentine: Clinical (tactile) manifestations

- Soft dentine
- (Leathery dentine)
- Firm dentine
- Hard dentine

Histological terms

- Necrotic zone
- Contaminated zone
- Demineralised zone
- Translucent zone
- Sound dentine
- Tertiary dentine
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of carious tissue removal</th>
<th>Previous names/further detail</th>
<th>Short descriptions</th>
<th>Indications for non-cleansable dentine carious lesions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Atraumatic Restorative Treatment (ART) | A specific technique for carious lesion management using hand instruments only | - Carious tissue removal using hand instruments only.  
- Pulpally; excavate to firm dentine in shallow lesions and to soft dentine in deep lesions.  
- Restore cavity and seal available pits and fissures with adhesive dental material, usually a high-viscosity glass-ionomer cement. | Primary & permanent teeth  
Shallow and moderate dentine carious lesions to allow adequate depth for a durable restoration |
| No removal | | - No dentine carious tissue removal. | Primary & permanent teeth  
Shallow and moderate carious lesions that appear non-cavitated clinically, radiographically they might extend into dentine. |
| Fissure sealant including ‘ART sealants’ (therapeutic) | | - Fissure sealants, place sealants (resins) or glass-ionomer cement over clinically intact enamel or enamel with signs of early breakdown. This can also be suitable where there is a micro-cavitation but the material is considered to have adequate mechanical properties to bridge any enamel breaches. | Primary teeth  
Moderate and deep non-cavitated and cavituated proximal carious lesions, radiographically – ‘clear’ band of dentine between carious lesion and pulp.  
Permanent teeth  
Not indicated. |
| Hall Technique | | - Preformed (stainless steel) crown is cemented over the primary molar tooth to seal dentine carious lesions | Primary & permanent teeth  
Cavitated dentine carious lesions that can be made cleansable; might not be restorable (for permanent teeth, might also be suitable for root surface caries). |
| Non-Restorative Cavity Control | Non-Restorative Caries Treatment, Non-Operative Caries Treatment and Prevention, Slicing Technique | - Cavitated dentine carious lesions are transformed to cleansable forms that can be cleaned by the patient or parent/carer with a toothbrush.  
- May or may not be supported by regular fluoride varnish application or placement of glass-ionomer based material. | Primary & permanent teeth  
Deep carious lesions*. |
| Selective Removal to Soft Dentine | Partial, incomplete, minimally invasive or ultraconservative caries removal | - Pulpally; remove carious tissue until soft dentine is reached.  
- Enough tissue is removed to place a durable restoration avoiding pulp exposure.  
- Periphery of cavity; clean to hard dentine (similar to sound dentine). | Deep carious lesions*. |
| Selective Removal to Firm Dentine | Partial caries removal, minimally invasive or incomplete caries removal | - Pulpally; remove carious tissue until leathery or firm dentine (resistant to hand excavator) is reached.  
- Periphery of cavity; clean to hard dentine (similar to sound dentine). | Deep carious lesions*. |
| Stepwise Removal | Stepwise caries removal, Stepwise excavation, 2-step caries removal | - Pulpally; Selective Removal to Soft Dentine during 1st step – remove carious tissue until soft dentine is reached.  
- Enough tissue is removed to place a durable restoration avoiding pulp exposure.  
- Periphery of cavity; clean until hard dentine is reached.  
Subsequently (6-12 months)  
- Pulpally; Selective Removal to Firm Dentine and place a long-term restoration. | Not indicated – use Selective Removal to Soft dentine.  
Deep carious lesions*. |
| Non-selective to Hard Dentine (not advocated) | Complete caries removal | - Pulpally & cavity periphery; carious tissue removal aims to remove all demineralised dentine to reach hard dentine, leaving no softened dentine.  
- Considered over-treatment | Not advocated. |

*Shallow and moderate lesions involving the outer pulpal two thirds or three quarters of dentine radiographically, or where there is no risk of pulp exposure  
*Deep = radiographically involving the inner pulpal third or quarter of dentine, or with clinically assessed risk of pulpal exposure
Table 2. The 42 Individual terms for carious tissue removal/management techniques derived through structured literature searching and consultation within the ICCC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrestment of caries lesion in dentin</td>
<td>Non-restorative caries treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>Non-restorative therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atraumatic restorative treatment</td>
<td>Non-surgical caries management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caries control achieved</td>
<td>One step complete caries removal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete caries removal</td>
<td>One-step incomplete excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete excavation</td>
<td>Partial caries removal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative treatment of deep caries lesions</td>
<td>Partial excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete caries removal</td>
<td>Sealing in caries lesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete excavation</td>
<td>Sealing-in caries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect pulp cap</td>
<td>Sealing-in caries “using restorative materials/techniques” (resins, crowns, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimally invasive caries removal</td>
<td>Sealing-in caries using “non-restorative caries treatment” (e.g., sealants, infiltration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimally invasive indirect pulp therapy technique</td>
<td>Selective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimally invasive operative approach</td>
<td>Selective excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimally invasive operative caries management</td>
<td>Stepwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum intervention dentistry</td>
<td>Stepwise caries removal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No caries removal</td>
<td>Stepwise excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dentinal caries removal</td>
<td>Surgical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-invasive management of caries lesions</td>
<td>Two-step complete excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-mechanical removal of carious tissue</td>
<td>Two-step incomplete excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-operative caries treatment and prevention</td>
<td>ultra-conservative treatment (cleaning sizable cavities with brush and paste in primary teeth) and small cavities restored with ART</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-operative management of caries lesion (arrest of caries lesion)</td>
<td>Unselective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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