

Original Article

Comparison of Flexural Strength between Five Commercial Bulk-Fill Resin Composites

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Abstract

Objective: To compare the flexural strength of five different bulk-fill resin composites.

Material and method: Five different types of bulk-fill resin composite were used in this study (Sonic-Fill, Filtek Bulk-fill Posterior Restorative, Tetric N-Ceram Bulk-Fill, Tetric Flow Bulk-Fill and Surefill SDR). Bulk-fill resin composite specimens were prepared using a stainless steel mold with dimensions, 25x2x2 mm, as specified by the ISO 4049 standard. Each group was composed of 10 specimens, giving a total of 50 specimens. The specimens were light cured and stored in a distilled water bath at 37°C for 24 hours. All specimens were tested with the universal test machine at a crosshead speed of 1 mm/min. The data was analyzed by one-way ANOVA and Tukey's test ($\alpha=0.05$).

Results: Five commercial bulk-fill resin composites had flexural strength values ranging from 84.3 to 138.9 MPa. The Sonic-Fill group showed significantly higher flexural strength, followed by Filtek-BF-Posterior, Tetric N-Ceram BF, Tetric Flow BF, and Surefill SDR.

Conclusion: According to the obtained results, Sonic-Fill resin composite had the highest flexural strength, followed by Filtek-BF-Posterior, Tetric N-Ceram BF, Tetric Flow BF, and Surefill SDR.

Keywords: Bulk-fill resin composite, Flexural strength

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Introduction

Nowadays, resin composites and tooth-colored restorative materials are widely used. They are high in demand and commonly used for esthetic reasons. There have been many attempts to improve their physical and mechanical properties to accommodate every dentist's needs. Disadvantages of resin composites include time consumption, high shrinkage, voids due to incremental technique, marginal leakage due to their flowable capacity and limitation in depth of cure.¹ Conventional resin composite materials still have these drawbacks. Therefore, a new group of resin composites, bulk-fill resin composites, was invented to solve these problems.

Bulk-fill resin composite is an alternative tooth-colored restorative material to conventional resin composites. Bulk-fill resin composite simplifies clinical steps and reduces the procedure time as it has a curing capacity to a depth of at least 4 mm.² Conventional composites use incremental filling technique to manage shrinkage stress.³ However, void formation may occur between each resin composite layer.⁴ It has been proven that bulk-fill resin composites can lower shrinkage stresses, which elevate longevity of the resin composite restoration.⁵

One aspect of promoting restoration durability is prevention of secondary caries. To minimize secondary caries formation, good marginal adaptation is expected. It was shown that bulk-fill resin composites have a comparable restoration longevity to conventional resin composites.^{6,7}

Mechanical properties are always a concern when choosing restorative materials. There are studies showing that bulk-fill resin composites do not have inferior mechanical properties than conventional resin composites.^{5,8-11} On the other hand, there have

been some studies showing bulk-fill resin composite had lower mechanical properties than conventional resin composites.^{10, 12, 13} Nevertheless, their clinical performances are still acceptable as an alternative tooth-colored restorative material.^{1, 14-16}

The present study was conducted to compare the flexural strength of five commercially available bulk-fill resin composites in Thailand. The null hypothesis was that there would be no significant difference in flexural strength among five bulk-fill resin composites.

Materials and Methods

Five bulk-filled resin composites were chosen for this study as shown in Table 1. Ten specimens for each group were prepared (N=50) using a metallic mold with the dimensions specified by the ISO 4049 standard, (25 ± 2) mm x (2 ± 0.1) mm x (2 ± 0.1) mm (Figure 1). A glass slide was placed over the mold, which was filled with resin composite in order to remove excess material and eliminate any voids that might have occurred. The specimens were light cured for 40 sec per surface using a LED light-curing unit (DEMI PLUS, Kerr, WI, USA) with 1,100 mW/cm² intensity according to the manufacturer of the test material. The excess materials were removed with scalpel blade and abrasive paper. All samples were stored in a distilled water bath at 37°C for 24 hours. Three-point bending test was performed using a universal test machine (EZ-S 500N, Shimadzu Corporation, Kyoto, Japan) using the flexural strength testing apparatus with a crosshead speed of 1 mm/min, and loading rate of 50 N/min (Figure 2). Load was exerted on the specimen until the specimen reached its yield point or at the point of fracture. The flexural strength (σ) was calculated in Mega Pascals (MPa), using the formula below.

$$\sigma = \frac{3FL}{2bd^2}$$

where F: the maximum load (Newton),
L: the distance (millimeter) between supports,
b: the width (millimeter) of specimen,
d: the thickness (millimeter) of the specimen.

Data was analyzed using statistical software (IBM® SPSS® 20, SPSS, Chicago, IL, USA). Parametric statistical test was used with assumptions of normal distribution and homogeneity of variance within each group. One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison test were used to statistically analyze the mean of flexural strength data ($P \leq 0.05$).

Result

The means and standard deviations of flexural strength are demonstrated in Table 2. One-way ANOVA showed a significant difference in flexural strength values between different groups. The results of this study demonstrated that five commercially bulk-filled resin composites provided flexural strengths ranging between 84.3 to 138.9 MPa.

Sonic-Fill group demonstrated significantly higher flexural strength compared to the other groups. There was no significant difference between Filtek-BF-posterior and Tetric N-Ceram BF dental composites ($P > 0.05$) in terms of flexural strength. Tetric Flow BF and Surefill SDR flowable groups demonstrated significantly lower flexural strength to all other groups. There was no significant difference between Tetric Flow BF and Surefill SDR flowable dental composites ($P > 0.05$).

Discussion

Compressive and flexural strength are important factors to be considered when selecting composite resin materials for clinical use as the tooth, and restorations are always subjected to both flexural and compressive forces during the mastication.¹⁷ As flexural strength reflects resistance to compressive and tension stresses that act in the material simultaneously, the evaluation of this property is important for resin polymerized based materials. In this study, the specimens were polymerized by light in a metal mold. The specimens were tested using the three-point bending test, in accordance with ISO 4049. It has been widely used for mechanical evaluation, especially in flexural strength, due to ease of the specimen preparation and testing. However, the major drawback of this method is that it is only performed on brittle materials and fiber-polymer composites, rarely on ductile materials such as metals.¹⁸

Mechanical challenge in posterior restorations for direct restorative resin composites has been considered. Filler technology has been improving, providing large variety of sizes, shapes, and constitution of filler particles, leading to the plethora of currently available options.¹⁹ Recently, a new material has been introduced as bulk-fill resin composites. The purposes of inventing this type of resin material are to decrease the time strain of incremental filling and decrease risk of potential errors such as voids and contamination.²⁰ The bulk-fill resin composites are claimed to allow

light-cure in depth of 4 to 5 mm in one step while generating similar shrinkage stresses to those conventional resin composite materials. Different manufacturers have used different mechanisms to achieve deeper polymerization, such as adding more efficient photo-initiators and reducing stress. In fact, using similar refractive index of fillers and monomers with reducing filler content was considered in approach to allow a greater depth of polymerization. However, lower filler content may result in lower mechanical properties, and a decrease in strength properties of the materials. The advantages of bulk-fill resin composites are adaptation to the cavity wall, reduced shrinkage stress, and particularly its suitability for patients with limited compliance.²¹ For conventional composites, in order to achieve adequate polymerization, the resin composite increments should not be thicker than 2 mm.²² In this study, the specimens were light cured from all directions, allowing overlap, which definitely allowed adequate polymerization.

Many studies have evaluated the mechanical properties of bulk-fill resin composite, most often the flexural strength testing has been investigated using the three-point bending test according to ISO 4049.^{13, 23-26} In the present study, the flexural strength of bulk-fill resin composite was found to be between 84.34 to 138.92 MPa, which higher than the minimum standard value required by ISO4049 (80 MPa). Thus, all of bulk-fill materials in this study can be used suitably in oral cavity as an alternative posterior filling material.

As a result, one-way ANOVA showed significant difference in flexural strength values between different groups. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study was rejected. Sonic-Fill composite contains higher filler content (~83.5%), and demonstrated significantly higher flexural strength compared to the other groups. The result of this study is similar to previous studies that compared the flexural strength of bulk-fill resin composite.^{13, 27} The flexural strengths of Filtek-BF-Posterior and Tetric N-Ceram BF, high viscosity bulk-fill resin composites, are relatively similar which may be due to the similarity of percentage of inorganic filler contents of the two materials (~76.5% and ~80.0%wt, respectively). On the other hand, Tetric Flow BF and Surefill SDR groups, which are low viscosity bulk-fill resin composites, demonstrated the lowest flexural strength value due to a lower filler load percentage compared to the other groups (~68-69 wt%).

The results of this study were in agreement with a previous study. The flexural strength of the three brands of low viscosity bulk-fill resin composite (Beautiful Bulk Flow, SDR, and Filtek Bulk Flow), which contains approximately 64.5 - 72.5 wt% filler load content, were significantly lower than that of the high viscosity bulk-fill resin composite group with higher filler load content (76.5-80.0 wt%).²⁸

Kim et al.²⁹ reported that high percent filler loading influenced the mechanical properties of resin composite, with the highest filler content demonstrating the highest flexural strength, flexural modulus, and microhardness.

Leprince et al.¹³ reported that the percent filler mass fraction of commercial bulk-fill resin composites range between 60.7 to 85.3, this is in positive correlation with mechanical properties. They also stated that the mechanical properties of the conventional high viscosity resin composite were mostly higher than the bulk-fill resin composite. Thus, placement of bulk-fill composite materials under high occlusal loading should be carefully considered.

Previous studies reported that the degree of filler loading only slightly affected the mechanical behavior of composite resin materials. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that filler loading alone affected the outcome of this study. Several other factors that may also contribute to the results include the use of different resin matrixes, different types of fillers, or filler size and their distribution. Normally, both conventional microhybrid and nanohybrid composites

have superior mechanical properties when compared to bulk fill composite. Therefore, previous studies recommended veneering bulk fill material with conventional composite.³⁰

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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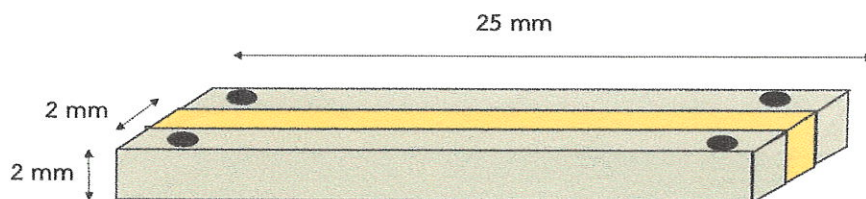


Figure 1 The schematic diagram of the metal mold used in this study.

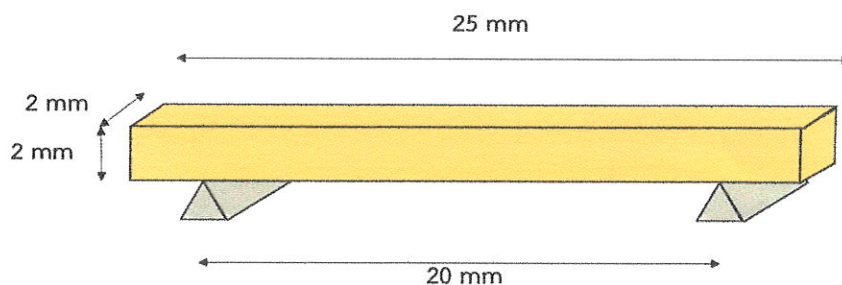


Figure 2 The schematic diagram of the three-point bending test.

Table 1 shows type of bulk-fill resin composite, lot number, manufacturer and compositions.

Bulk-fill resin composites (Color)	Abbreviation	Manufacturer	Resin Matrix	Filler	Lot no.
Sonic Fill 2 (A1)	Sonic-Fill	Kerr, Orange, CA, USA	Bis-EMA, Bis-GMA, poly (oxy-1,2-ethanediyl), a, a'- [(1-methylethylidene) β di-4, 1-phenylene]bis [x-[(2-methyl-1-oxo-2-propen-1-yloxy]- 2,20-ethylenedioxydiethyl dimethacrylate, TEGDMA	Barium glass filler, Silica glass filler	6527299
Filtek™ Bulk-fill Posterior Restorative (A1)	Filtek-BF-Posterior	3M ESPE, St Paul, MN USA	Aromatic UDMA, UDMA, 1,12-dodecanedimethacrylate	non-agglomerated/ non-aggregated silica filler, non-agglomerated/ non-aggregated filler, aggregated zirconia/silica cluster filler, ytterbium trifluoride filler	N948473
Tetric® N-Ceram Bulk-Fill (V/A)	Tetric N-Ceram BF	Ivoclar Vivadent	Bis-EMA, Bis-GMA, UDMA	Silanated barium glass filler	Y02738
Tetric® N-Flow Bulk-Fill (V/A)	Tetric Flow BF	Ivoclar Vivadent	Bis-EMA, Bis-GMA, UDMA	Silanated barium glass filler	X43433
Surefill SDR Flow	Surefill SDR	DENTSPLY Caulk	Modified UDMA, Bis-EMA, TEGDMA	Barium-alumino-fluoro-silicate glass, Strontium alumino-fluoro-silicate glass	1706000617

Abbreviations: Bis-GMA: bisphenol-A-glycidyl dimethacrylate, UDMA: urethane dimethacrylate, Bis-MPEPP: Bisphenol A polyethoxy methacrylate, Bis-EMA: ethoxylated bisphenol-A-dimethacrylate, TEGDMA: triethyleneglycol dimethacrylate,

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of flexural strength value of each Bulk-Fill resin composite.

Brands	Mean ± SD (MPa)
Sonic-Fill	138.9 ± 4.3 ^A
Filtek-BF-Posterior	118.3 ± 5.5 ^B
Tetric N-Ceram BF	114.6 ± 4.3 ^B
Tetric Flow BF	86.0 ± 6.5 ^C
Surefill SDR	84.3 ± 6.2 ^C

The same superscript letter indicates no significant difference between groups ($P>0.05$).

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บทคัดย่อ

การเปรียบเทียบความทนแรงดัดระหว่างเรซินคอมโพสิตชนิดบัลค์ฟิลล์ห้าผลิตภัณฑ์

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วัตถุประสงค์: เพื่อศึกษาเปรียบเทียบค่าความทนแรงดัดของเรซินคอมโพสิตชนิดบัลค์ฟิลล์ห้าผลิตภัณฑ์

วัสดุและวิธีการ: เตรียมชิ้นทดสอบจำนวน 50 ชิ้น จากบัลค์ฟิลล์เรซินคอมโพสิต 5 ผลิตภัณฑ์ คือ Sonic-Fill, Filtek Bulk-fill Posterior Restorative, Tetric N-Ceram Bulk-Fill, Tetric Flow Bulk-Fill และ Surefill SDR ขนาด 25x2x2 ลูกบาศก์มิลลิเมตร กลุ่มละ 10 ชิ้น จากนั้นนำชิ้นทดสอบไปแช่ในน้ำกลั่น ณ อุณหภูมิ 37 องศาเซลเซียส เป็นเวลา 24 ชั่วโมง ตาม ISO 4049 แล้วนำไปทดสอบค่าความทนแรงดัด ด้วยเครื่องทดสอบสากลที่ความเร็วหัวกด 1 มิลลิเมตรต่อนาที และวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลทางสถิติด้วยการวิเคราะห์ความแปรปรวนทางเดียวและเปรียบเทียบความแตกต่างระหว่างกลุ่มด้วยสถิติชนิดทุกัยที่ระดับความเชื่อมั่นร้อยละ 95

ผลการศึกษา: ค่าความทนแรงดัดของวัสดุแต่ละชนิดมีค่าเฉลี่ยที่แตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยยะสำคัญทางสถิติโดยทั้ง 5 ผลิตภัณฑ์ มีค่าเฉลี่ยอยู่ระหว่าง 84.3 – 138.9 MPa ค่าความทนแรงดัดของกลุ่ม Sonic-Fill สูงที่สุด ตามด้วยกลุ่มของ Filtek Bulk-fill Posterior Restorative, Tetric N-Ceram Bulk-Fill, Tetric Flow Bulk-Fill และ Surefill SDR ตามลำดับ

สรุป: ค่าความทนแรงดัดของกลุ่ม Sonic-Fill สูงที่สุด ตามด้วยกลุ่มของ Filtek Bulk-fill Posterior Restorative, Tetric N-Ceram Bulk-Fill, Tetric Flow Bulk-Fill และ Surefill SDR ตามลำดับ

คำสำคัญ: เรซินคอมโพสิตชนิดบัลค์ฟิลล์, ความทนต่อแรงดัดของวัสดุ