Internal whitening of UL1
Jacob Krikor shares his experience of teeth whitening when it comes to incisors

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my previous article, we dis-
cussed the classic clinical sit-
uation we face when we need
to match a broken or discoloured
ing single incisor in the front with
the neighbouring teeth. In this
article I want to share my experi-
ence regarding internal whiten-
ing and I am keen to hear your
tips and advice about this topic.

In this case (Fig 1), I was
asked by the patient in the pic-
ture whether I could do some-
thing to improve the look of the
upper-left central incisor. I of-
fered him two options:

1. Internal whitening
2. A veneer to cover the tooth.

The patient opted for the
internal whitening. It is very
important to inform the patient
that the treatment outcome is unpre-
dictable and that the tooth may need
veneering in the future after all.

The procedure explained
I removed the palatinal filling
and cleaned the pulp cham-
ber properly and even removed
some of the root-filling mate-
rial, up to one mm apical of the
gingival margin. Glass ionomer
was used to seal the canal and
the cavity was filled with a cot-
ton pellet saturated with Opal-
escence 10 per cent Carbamide Peroxide gel. A temporary filling
sealed the cavity. The patient was
scheduled to come back after a
week for evaluation.

A week later, the result was
very satisfactory (Fig 2). The
temporary filling was removed
and the cavity was cleaned
properly with water to remove
any whitening gel remnants. It
was then filled with the lightest
shade composite I had after etch-
ing and bonding the inner walls
of the chamber. And the patient
was very pleased about the quick
transformation of the discol-
oured tooth.

Challenges faced
I have to ad-
mit that I tried
the internal whit-
ingen a few times in
the past with varied
results where some
teeth did not respond
at all. I relate this to
blocked dentine tubuli
or discolorations
that are very tough to
remove with whitening
agents. Some of
the successfully whit-
ened teeth discoloured
again over time albeit
not to the same extent
as they were before
the treatment.

The long-term suc-
cess of internal whit-
ening can be disap-
pointing even when
using a stronger 50
per cent hydrogen
peroxide to whiten the
teeth. In this study,
the short-term results
proved very success-
ful aesthetically, but
in the long-term the
success rate falls be-
low 50 per cent. It also
demonstrated how the
procedure is associ-
ated with a risk of ex-
ternal root resorption.
The use of sodium
perborate mixed with water
was recommended so the aes-
thetic outcome is still accept-
able and the potential for re-
sorption may be minimised.

You can also read more
about internal whitening in
one of my favourite books,
Bonded Porcelain Restora-
tions in the Anterior Den-
tition, A Biomimetic Approach,
by Dr Pascal Magne and Prof
Urs Belser.

If you want to share
your tips and tricks with
your colleagues, just go to the
knowledge bank on www.
odonti.com and leave your
comments on this case or pub-
lish your own cases.

Fig1 Discoloured UL1
Fig2 Successful whitening of UL1

About the author
Jacob Krikor graduated from dental
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