AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF RANKL AND SCLEROSTIN IN DENTOALVEOLAR ANKYLOSIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Orthodontics)

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### 1.4 List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ab</td>
<td>Antibody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Avidin-biotin complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEC</td>
<td>3-Amino-9-ethylcarbazole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Antigen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Alkaline phosphatase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATP</td>
<td>Adenosine-5’-triphosphate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMP</td>
<td>Bone morphogenetic protein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMU</td>
<td>Basic metabolic unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF</td>
<td>Colony stimulating factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECM</td>
<td>Extracellular matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTA</td>
<td>Ethylenediaminetetra-acetic acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERM</td>
<td>Epithelial rests of Malassez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ig</td>
<td>Immunoglobulin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGF</td>
<td>Insulin-like growth factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Interleukin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Molar (molarity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-CSF</td>
<td>Macrophage colony-stimulating factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMP</td>
<td>Matrix metalloproteinases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mRNA</td>
<td>Messenger ribonucleic acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPG</td>
<td>Osteoprotegerin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OY</td>
<td>Osteocyte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBS</td>
<td>Phosphate buffered solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDL</td>
<td>Periodontal ligament</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PTH  Parathyroid hormone
PTHrP  Parathyroid hormone-related protein
RANK  Receptor activator of nuclear factor kappa-β
RANKL  Receptor activator of nuclear factor kappa-β ligand
RNA  Ribonucleic acid
SCL  Sclerostin
SOST  The gene encoding for sclerostin
TGF  Transforming growth factor
TNF  Tumour necrosis factor
TRAP  Tartrate-resistant acid phosphatase

Abbreviations of length

mm  Millimetre
µm  Micrometre

Abbreviations of volume

ml  Millilitre
µl  Microlitre

Abbreviations of weight

g  Gram
kg  Kilogram
mg  Milligram
ng  Nanogram
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And finally, to my parents, Marion and Derek. Thank you for raising me to believe I can accomplish whatever I set my mind to.
3 THESIS DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Shelley Coburn

30th June 2015
4 ABSTRACT

**Background:** Dentoalveolar ankylosis may occur spontaneously or as a sequela to dental trauma and results in an area of bone fusing to the tooth (Kurol 1981). Infraocclusion following dentoalveolar ankylosis results in a number of significant orthodontic sequelae. These include over-eruption of the opposing tooth, tipping of adjacent teeth towards the ankylosed tooth, a loss of arch length, space loss and a shift of the dental midline (Messer and Cline 1980; Andlaw 1974; Ponduri et al. 2009). Vertical alveolar growth may also be hindered (Kjaer et al. 2008). The understanding of the biological processes behind the formation and repair of the ankylosis lesion is incomplete. Following dental trauma, the periodontal ligament (PDL) may be the source of the cells that repopulate a tooth root defect that determine whether ankylosis occurs (Erausquin and Devoto 1970; Lin et al. 2000; Melcher 1970; Line et al. 1974). When the PDL space is repopulated by cells from a source outside the true PDL tissues (such as the alveolar bone) healing may occur by way of dentoalveolar ankylosis.

Research in the field of bone biology has recently focused on the role of the osteocyte. This cell, with its unique location embedded in bone, may have an essential role in bone metabolism. Osteocytes produce sclerostin, a protein that inhibits bone formation. There is also evidence that the osteocyte may be a major source of receptor activator of NF-κB (RANKL) which is essential for osteoclastogenesis. This project aims to investigate the expression of RANKL and sclerostin in a rat model of dentoalveolar ankylosis induced by a hypothermal insult.

The null hypothesis is that an applied cold insult and subsequent ankylosis does not affect the expression of RANKL and sclerostin within the dentoalveolar complex.
Methods: Dentoalveolar ankylosis was induced in fifteen, eight week old, male, Sprague-Dawley rats (5 groups of 3 rats each) by application of dry ice to the upper right first molar tooth. An additional 3 rats served as untreated controls and the experimental rats were sacrificed at days 0, 4, 7, 14 and 28. Immunohistochemical detection of RANKL and sclerostin was performed and the number of RANKL and sclerostin positive and negative cells as well as the number of empty lacunae representing dead osteocytes were calculated and compared between groups.

Results: The cold insult resulted in dentoalveolar ankylosis, with the periodontal ligament (PDL) almost completely replaced by bone in the furcation region of the root 14 days after injury with regeneration of the PDL evident after 28 days. Resorption of the ankylosis bone and cementum was evident in the furcation region. There was also a statistically significant increase in the number of empty lacunae due to osteocyte death that coincides with the incidence of maximal ankylosis.

RANKL was detected in bone marrow stromal cells, osteoblasts and bone lining cells, osteoclasts, endothelial-like cells lining vessels, epithelial cells, odontoblasts and periodontal fibroblasts. However, clear staining in osteocytes was not evident. Epithelial rests of Malassez showed strong expression of RANKL.

When ankylosis was present, there was a statistically significant difference in sclerostin expression between the areas of bone closest to, and farthest away, from the furcation area. There was a non-statistically significant trend towards reduced sclerostin expression at days 7 and 14 followed by a slight increase in expression at day 28. The slight increase in sclerostin expression at day 28 may indicate the establishment of a healing response.

In considering these results, it should be noted that this experiment uses a model of ankylosis in which the ankylosis lesion develops following a thermal insult. The factors that initiate ankylosis in a clinical situation are incompletely understood and may differ from this model.
Conclusions: Whilst RANKL was not detected in osteocytes in this model of ankylosis there was strong expression of RANKL by ERM in the PDL and a significant change in sclerostin expression near the area of ankylosis. This may contribute evidence that RANKL, sclerostin and the osteocyte might have a role in influencing the regeneration of the PDL following dentoalveolar ankylosis.

The null hypothesis that an applied cold insult and subsequent ankylosis does not affect the expression of RANKL and sclerostin within the dentoalveolar complex is rejected.