

**Investigation of Root-Crown Ratio of Upper Anterior Teeth in a Group of Turkish Children**

**ABSTRACT**

**Aims:** The aim of this study was to evaluate of the root-crown ratio in upper anterior teeth using panoramic radiographs in a group of Turkish children.

**Study Design:** Various measurements were made on panoramic radiographs in the study.

**Place and Duration of Study:** Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Dentistry, Department of Pedodontics between June 11, 2019 and December 11, 2020.

**Methodology:** In this study, the crown heights and root lengths of the upper anterior teeth were measured in digital panoramic radiographs of 568 children [284 girls, 284 boys] aged between 13-14 years. No patients with any systemic disease or syndrome, filling or caries in their upper anterior teeth were included. Measurements were made under dim light using Image J program. Crown heights and root lengths were measured using modified Lind's method. One-Way Analysis of Variance and Tukey multiple comparison test were used in the analysis of the data.

**Results:** No statistical difference was detected between root lengths of the teeth [ $p=0.13$ ]. Crown heights of central teeth were longer than lateral teeth [ $p<0.001$ ]. The highest root-crown ratios were determined in lateral teeth [ $p<0.001$ ]. Similar root-crown ratios were found in symmetrical teeth.

**Conclusion:** This study may provide convenience to dentists when the root length of teeth in need of root canal treatment cannot be determined by radiographs or in cases where digital root length measuring devices are not available. It can also guide the estimation of crown height and root lengths of upper anterior teeth in Turkish children.

**Key words:** *Child patient, panoramic radiography, root-crown ratio, lateral tooth, central tooth, upper jaw*

UNDER PEER REVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

Knowing the crown and root lengths of the teeth and the ratio of these lengths are important factors for proper dental treatments. Especially in traumatized teeth, the root-crown ratio becomes more important. Traumatic dental injuries are frequently seen in children and young patients and may require emergency treatment [1]. Excessive substance loss may occur in the teeth and, depending on the type of injury, teeth may lose their vitality in the early or late period [2]. If the root-crown ratio of the tooth changes depending on the amount of substance loss in the tooth, the prognosis of the tooth and the treatment planning of the patient will be affected by this situation. Therefore, considering the crown-root ratio, the appropriate restoration type is determined [3, 4].

In endodontic treatments, firstly, the working length should be determined to stay within the boundaries of the root canal system [5]. As a result of the working length determined longer than normal, overflowing causes foreign body reaction in the peri-radicular region. When the working length is determined incompletely, healing cannot be expected because the infected tissues cannot be cleaned completely [6, 7]. Many methods are used to determine the working length. Canal instruments placed in the root canal and radiographs are mostly used. The use of electronic apex locators is increasingly common [8]. Knowing the average root-crown ratio or root length of the teeth supports these methods.

In orthodontic treatments, knowing the root length can help the orthodontists for the healthy progress of the treatment. Root resorption induced by the treatment is observed in teeth receiving orthodontic treatment. Microscopic resorption occurs in all teeth during orthodontic movement, but sometimes it is possible to occur severely [9]. It is known that this risk is higher in teeth with short roots compared to teeth with average roots length [10]. For this reason, knowing the root lengths of the teeth is also important in orthodontic treatments.

In forensic dentistry, skull and tooth features may be used to determine gender. Crown and root lengths of teeth are characteristic for the genders and facilitate estimation for forensic physicians [11, 12].

Panoramic radiographs are often used to view anatomical structures and teeth. They can also be used to determine crown height and root length [13, 14]. The images on the radiography may be distorted and may show less or more than their actual size. However, this situation has less effect on vertical

measurements. In addition, elongation or shortening of the tooth length on the x-ray is not important in vertical measurements [15, 16].

When the literature is reviewed, it is seen that the root-crown ratio has been investigated specifically for societies with a limited number of studies, but no such study has been conducted on the Turkish population [13,17-19]. The aim of this study is to evaluate the root-crown ratio in the upper anterior teeth using panoramic radiographs in a group of healthy Turkish children.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this retrospective study, patients aged 13-14 years, who applied to Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Dentistry, Department of Pedodontics between June 11, 2019 and December 11, 2020, were included.

Inclusion criteria in the study:

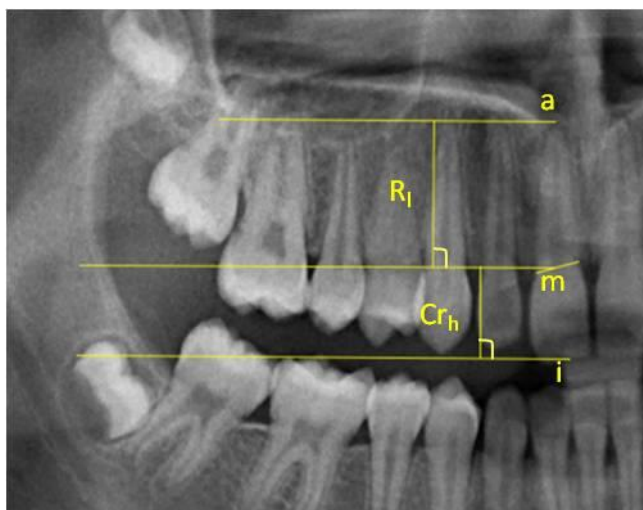
- No systemic disease or syndrome
- Absence of decay and restoration in upper anterior teeth
- No history of orthodontic treatment and severe crowding
- High quality of panoramic radiographs
- Not previously traumatized teeth

Exclusion criteria:

- Presence of a systemic disease and syndrome
- Caries and restoration in at least one of the upper anterior teeth
- Previous orthodontic treatment
- Radiographs of low quality and with no clear reference points
- A history of trauma in the upper anterior teeth
- Bony lesions attached to root
- Hypercementosis and dilacerations
- Cleft lip and cleft palate
- Radiotherapy and chemotherapy in head and neck

Panoramic radiographs were taken with a digital panoramic x-ray device [Sirona Orthophos XG, Sirona Dental Company, Germany] with 60 kVp, 3mA and 14.1 seconds exposure time. Maxillary central and lateral teeth were examined on digital panoramic film taken from 568 patients [284 boys, 284 girls] who met the inclusion criteria. All radiographs examined were individually calibrated. Image J program [Java V.1.8.0\_172] was used to measure the root and crown lengths. All measurements were made under dim light.

Modified Lind's method was used for measurements [14]. Modified Lind method: i: incisal level, a: apical level, m: midpoint of a straight line that connects the points of intersection between the outer contours of root and crown. The distances between the parallel lines drawn from the reference points [i, m and a] were measured in mm and the root lengths [RI] of the teeth and the crown heights [Crh] were determined [Fig. 1]. Root-crown ratio was found by proportioning these lengths.



**Fig. 1. Modified Lind method. i: incisal level, a: apical level, Rl: root length, Crh: crown height, m: midpoint of a straight line that connects the points of intersection between the outer contours of root and crown.**

Shapiro-Wilk normality test was applied to check whether the obtained data showed normal distribution and it was determined that it showed normal distribution [ $P > .05$ ]. For this reason, differences between treatment groups were determined by One-Way ANOVA and Tukey's multiple comparison tests. The findings were expressed as mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, and  $P < .05$  was accepted significance level. All statistical calculations were made in SPSS 22.0 V. statistics package program.

## RESULTS

This study was conducted on the panoramic radiographs of patients who met the inclusion criteria. No statistical difference was detected between root lengths of the teeth [ $P=.13$ ]. The longest root was detected in the maxillary right lateral tooth [21.29 mm]. The shortest roots were measured in the maxillary right and left central teeth [10.33 mm] [Table 1].

Crown heights of central teeth were longer than lateral teeth. There was no statistical difference between the crown lengths of symmetrical teeth [ $P<.001$ ]. The shortest crowns were measured in the maxillary right and left lateral teeth [5.99 mm]. The longest crown was detected in the left central tooth [11.62 mm] [Table 1].

**Table 1: Crown height, root lengths and root-crown ratio in all patients**

			Root	Crown	Root-crown
			length	height *	ratio*
Right side	Lateral teeth	Mean±SD	14.49±1.57	8.02±0.8 <sup>a</sup>	1.82 ±0.23 <sup>a</sup>
		Min	10.48	5.99	1.31
		Max	21.29	10.65	2.96
	Central teeth	Mean±SD	14.74±1.65	9.13±08 <sup>b</sup>	1.62±0.18 <sup>b</sup>
		Min	10.33	6.71	1.16
		Max	19.55	11.57	2.11
Left side	Lateral teeth	Mean±SD	14.52±1.53	8.07±0.7 <sup>a</sup>	1.81±0.21 <sup>a</sup>
		Min	10.75	5.99	1.28
		Max	20.17	11.05	2.61
	Central teeth	Mean±SD	14.78±1.61	9.17±0.8 <sup>b</sup>	16.2±0.19 <sup>b</sup>
		Min	10.33	6.84	1.08
		Max	19.15	11.62	2.26
<i>P- value</i>			.13	< .001	< .001

*SD: Standard deviation; \* There is a statistical difference between different letters in the same column*

The highest root-crown ratios were determined in lateral teeth [ $P < 0.001$ ]. Similar root-crown ratios were found in symmetrical teeth [Table 1]. Similar situations were observed in terms of gender [Table 2 and 3]. In boys, both root lengths and crown lengths were longer than girls.

**Table 2. Crown height, root lengths and root-crown ratio in the girls**

			Root	Crown	Root-crown
			length	height *	ratio*
Right side	Lateral	Mean±SD	13.97±1.48	7.88±0.77 <sup>a</sup>	1.78±0.2 <sup>a</sup>
	teeth	Min	10.48	5.99	1.31
		Max	17.14	10.31	2.64
	Central	Mean±SD	14.15±1.51	8.90±0.77 <sup>b</sup>	1.6±0.19 <sup>b</sup>
	teeth	Min	10.33	6.71	1.16
		Max	18.29	11.08	2.11
Left side	Lateral	Mean±SD	14.09±1.43	7.87±0.71 <sup>a</sup>	1.8±0.18 <sup>a</sup>
	teeth	Min	10.75	5.99	1.40
		Max	17.86	9.9	2.33
	Central	Mean±SD	14.19±1.45	8.94±0.83 <sup>b</sup>	1.6±0.19 <sup>b</sup>
	teeth	Min	10.33	6.84	1.20
		Max	17.78	11.46	2.26
<i>P- value</i>			.6	< .001	< .001

*SD: Standard deviation; \* There is a statistical difference between different letters in the same column*

**Table 3. Crown height, root lengths and root-crown ratio in the boys**

			Root	Crown	Root-crown
			length	height *	ratio*
Right side	Lateral	Mean±SD	15±1.49	8.16±0.73 <sup>a</sup>	1.85±0.25 <sup>a</sup>
	teeth	Min	11.91	6.22	1.44
		Max	21.29	10.65	2.96
	Central	Mean±SD	15.32±1.56	9.35±0.76 <sup>b</sup>	1.64±0.18 <sup>b</sup>
	teeth	Min	11.20	7.5	1.27
		Max	19.55	11.57	2.08
Left side	Lateral	Mean±SD	14.94±1.51	8.27±0.74 <sup>a</sup>	1.82±0.23 <sup>a</sup>
	teeth	Min	11.7	6.69	1.28
		Max	20.17	11.05	2.61
	Central	Mean±SD	15.38±1.54	9.39±0.77 <sup>b</sup>	1.65±0.19 <sup>b</sup>
	teeth	Min	11.35	7.68	1.08
		Max	19.15	11.62	2.05
<i>P- value</i>			.07	< .001	< .001

*SD: Standard deviation; \* There is a statistical difference between different letters in the same column*

## DISCUSSION

In dentistry, crown and root lengths are very important in restorative, endodontic, orthodontic and prosthetic treatments. Although the root length does not show any elongation after the apex is closed, it is possible to change the crown height with restorative and prosthetic treatments. In dental treatments, it is preferred to have a root-crown ratio of at least 1 or more [20, 21].

Wang et al. [16] reported that ethnic differences have an effect on tooth development and that the root-crown ratios of societies may vary depending on this difference. Among the studies in which the average root-crown ratios of various societies are reported, there is no such data for the Turkish population [13, 14, 18]. In the present study, this deficiency has been tried to be compensated and statistical differences were detected in root-crown ratio.



In addition to periapical and panoramic x-rays, which are routinely used in the evaluation of dental tissues, cone beam computed tomography [CBCT] imaging is also used. When studies evaluating the root-crown ratio are examined, it is seen that both panoramic x-rays and CBCT images are used for this purpose [17, 19]. Although it is thought that panoramic x-rays are not suitable for measuring tooth length due to their distortion, Stramotas et al. [22] stated that crown height and root length can be measured accurately in panoramic radiographs. In this study, panoramic radiographs were used to determine the crown and root lengths of the maxillary anterior teeth. Panoramic radiographies has some advantages such as all teeth can be seen at the same time, frequently preferred for diagnosis in first appointment, low radiation dose. In addition, CBCT is preferred in more specific situations [23]. In the study, all panoramic radiographs were taken with a single x-ray machine with constant magnification. Magnification that may occur in x-rays images are not cause a change in the root-crown ratio, as it affects both the root and the crowns of the teeth similarly [19].

Dentition, which is a part of growth and development, is affected by genetic, hereditary and environmental factors [24]. Radiation therapy taken in childhood may affect the development of tooth roots, causing them to remain short [25]. Short roots are also seen in syndromes such as Down and Steven Johnsons [26, 27]. For this reason, patients with syndrome and systemic disease were excluded from the study in order not to affect the measurements. In addition, individuals with trauma and caries in their maxillary incisors and patients who had orthodontic treatment were not included in the study.

Although the crown height of the central teeth was longer than the lateral teeth, no significant difference was found between the root lengths. In relation to this, it was observed that the root-crown ratio of the lateral teeth was higher than the central teeth. Results were consistent with the literature [28, 29]. Similar results had obtained in the studies of HaghaniFar et al. [18] in the Iranian population and Hölttä et al. [14] in the Caucasian population. In previous studies, it is seen that multi-root teeth were also included in the study [14, 18]. However, both occlusal reference determination and root length determination in multi-root teeth are quite difficult. In addition, depending on age, apex formation may continue. For this reason, multi-root teeth were not included in the present study.

Lähdesmäki et al. [30] reported that the root length was longer in males compared to females in their study on individuals with XYY chromosomes, and that the Y chromosome had an effect on tooth

development. Hölttä et al. [14] reported that the root-crown ratio of a group of teeth including maxillary incisors was higher in males in Caucasian populations. In this study, both root lengths and crown height were found to be higher in males than females.

Forensic dentists can assist other specialists in determining gender using tooth and skull features [11]. Various radiographic examinations and morphological characteristics of teeth are used in determination of age and gender in forensic cases. Considering the results obtained from this study, although longer crowns and root lengths were detected in males in terms of gender, it is thought that this situation alone will not be sufficient for age and sex determination and it is needed to evaluate together with other findings.

## **CONCLUSION**

The root length of the teeth is especially important for the planned treatments after dental trauma in the anterior region. When radiographic devices are not accessible or x-ray images cannot be taken due to patient-related factors, knowing the average root-crown ratio of the population provides convenience for dentists. This study can serve as a guide for the average root-crown ratio of anterior incisors in Turkish population.

## **CONSENT**

All authors declare that written informed consent was obtained from the patients' parents prior to any radiograph or intra/extra-oral examination.

## **ETHICAL APPROVAL**

This study was based on retrospectively evaluation of panoramic radiographs. Therefore, no ethical approval was obtained from the local ethical committee since only the achieve data were used for the study. However, informed consent according to Helsinki declaration, including all amendments and revisions, had been obtained before each standard examination.

#### COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist. The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

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