

# Evaluation Of Cytotoxicity Of Dental Materials Using The Mtt-Tetrazolium Method

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## Abstract

**Background:** Previous studies have shown that the cytotoxicity of dental materials are examined by direct contact and dentin barrier tests.

**Materials and Methods:** In this experimental study, the cytotoxic effects of thirteen restorative materials on direct contact of three different cell lines were assessed by MTT (3-(4,5-dimethylthiazole-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazoliumbromide) assay One hundred fifty six disk-shaped specimens from each material were prepared (according to the manufacturer's information) in standard mold (9 mm diameter and 2 mm thick). The samples were incubated for 24 and 72 h in basal medium supporting the growth of many different mammalian cells and following each incubation, cytotoxicity of the extracts to cultured gingival fibroblast, mesenchymal and neuron cells were measured by MTT assay.

**Results:** Data were statistically analyzed by one way and two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), at a significance level of  $p < 0.05$  and  $p < 0.001$  levels. Group ISP, XTB, TNC, TEC, SK, GCE, BEG, EQF, FBP showed low toxic properties, while ISM, F25, GCP and F95 demonstrated low cell survival rates and high toxic properties at incubation periods.

**Conclusion:** The results suggest that MTT analyzes were clearly sufficient to appraise the cytotoxicity of dental materials and to select biocompatible materials.

**Key Words:** MTT-tetrazolium, Fibroblasts, Neuron cells, Mesenchymal , Cytotoxicity

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## I. Introduction

Biocompatibility is the ability of a material to fulfill its current function in contact with living tissues without causing locally or systemically toxic, mutagenic, allergic, carcinogenic effects and without adversely affecting health. Biocompatible materials designed to interact with biological systems called biomaterials<sup>1-3</sup>.

When non-biocompatible materials interact with living systems, tissue reaction and the material is considered toxic. Cytotoxicity, which is the determining factor of biocompatibility, is defined as damage to cell function and structure as a result of disruption of the synthesis chain of macromolecules<sup>2,4-7</sup>.

Cell culture tests are frequently used to evaluate the biocompatibility of materials<sup>8-10</sup>. The procedures under standard conditions in cell culture tests can be repeated, and the measurements can be made by direct observation on cells. Furthermore, the experimental steps can be controlled, easily replicated, and unaffected by individual factors<sup>11-14</sup>. The correct evaluation of cytotoxicity requires certain and correct in vitro laboratory tests. So, it is significant to distinguish a suitable appropriate analysis. The MTT assay has been properly accustomed to identify cytotoxicity, as it is appropriately cheap, as well as rapid and basic<sup>15,16</sup>.

Wang et al<sup>17</sup>. expressed the MTT test and live cell calculation as follows in their study, "the MTT Assay is a susceptible and credible colorimetric testing that evaluates viability, proliferation and activation of cells. The test is based on the capacity of mitochondrial dehydrogenase enzymes in living cells to convert the yellow water-soluble substrate 3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyl tetrazolium bromide (MTT) into a dark blue formazan product that is insoluble in water. Viable cells are able to reduce the yellow MTT under tetrazolium ring cleavage to a water-insoluble purple-blue formation which precipitates in the cellular cytosol and can be dissolved after cell lysis, whereas cells being dead following a toxic damage, cannot transform MTT. This formation production is proportionate to the viable cell number and inversely proportional to the degree of Cytotoxicity"<sup>15,17-20</sup>.

As can be understood from the above information, the cytotoxic effect of longer-term (up to 72h) resin-based composite materials and glass ionomer cements was evaluated in this study.

## **II. Material And Methods**

Thirteen restorative materials were elected for this study: Tetric EvoCeram(TEC), Tetric- N Ceram (TNC), X-tra base (XTB), GC Essentia (GCE), Brilliant EverGlow® (BEG), Synergy (SK), Filtek Bulk Fill Posterior (FBP), GCP Glass Fill (GCP), IonoStar Plus (ISP), IonoStar Molar (ISM), GC Fuji II (F25), GC Fuji IX (F9S) and Equia Forte (EQF). As a result of the power analysis, the number of samples was determined as 12 for each material (n=12). The list of samples is listed in Table no 1.

### **Sample Preparation**

Depending on the type of materials, samples were prepared using standard molds with a diameter of 9 mm and a height of 2 mm. Condensation of non-polymerized materials placed in standard molds was achieved with diestema tape and cement glass. Additionally, transparent tape was applied to the surface of the samples to reduce oxygen inhibition. The samples were polymerized with an LED light source (Elipar Freelight II, 3M-ESPE, USA) at 1000 mW/cm<sup>2</sup> for 10 seconds. Samples produced as disks (n = 12) were sterilized with ultraviolet light for 24 hours before MTT testing. After each prepared sample was polymerized, it was immersed in the cell culture medium.

### **Cell Culture**

Human gingival fibroblast, neuron and mesenchymal cell lines were obtained from the ATCC (American Type Culture Collection) global biological resource center. Cells were inoculated with the Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium integrated with 10% FBS (Fetal Bovine Serum), 1% antibiotic (containing penicillin-streptomycin-amphotericin B) into culture dishes (flask) with a surface area of 25 cm<sup>2</sup>. All cells were incubated in standard conditions [37°C in a humidified atmosphere of 5% (v/v) CO<sub>2</sub>].

### **Preparation of Cell Production Containers**

Cells with active logarithmic growth covering 90-95% of the surface were separated from the flask base similar to the passage process and cell suspension was prepared with fresh nutrient medium. The prepared 200 mL cell suspension was evenly distributed in all compartments of the well plates where the materials were to be placed. After the addition of fresh medium, the samples were allowed to incubate again. After seven days of incubation at 5% CO<sub>2</sub> and 37°C humid temperature, whether the cells completely filled the eyes of the plates and the spindle characteristic structure of the fibroblasts were examined by microscope. Composite specimens sterilized under ultraviolet (UV) light for 2 hours; One by one, with the help of a sterile press, they were transported to the cell production containers in a sterile cabinet in direct contact with the cells. Analyzes were performed after 72 hours of incubation in a 37°C, 5% CO<sub>2</sub> incubator.

### **Cytotoxicity Test**

Cells ( $1 \times 10^4$ ) were sprinkled in each well of a 96-well plate and incubated for 24 h and 72 h at 37 °C. Cultures were then liabled to 100 µL of the extract medium. Fresh cell medium was used as control. After 24 h and 72 h, cell viability was examined with MTT assay. The MTT solution—(3-{4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl}-2,5-diphenyl tetrazolium bromide) was added to each well of the culture and the cells were incubated for 4 h at 37 °C. After four hours of MTT incubation, blue formazan crystals (visible intracellularly in the optical microscope) were dissolved by the addition of dimethyl sulfoxide (sigma, USA). Living cells with active metabolism converted MTT to a purple colored formazan product with an absorbance close to 550 nm. The absorbance value was read with a spectrophotometer device (µQuant, BadFriedrichshall, Biotek) and viable cell count was obtained. Determining viable cell levels

The following formula was used for;

Viability rate (%) = (Sample absorbance value) / (Control group absorbance value)×100.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Power analysis was preferred to determine the number of samples (n=12). IBM SPSS Statistics 22 (IBM SPSS, Türkiye) program was used to evaluate the results obtained from the research. One-way and two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) methods were used to interpret the data. Statistical significance was evaluated at p<0.05 and p<0.001 levels.

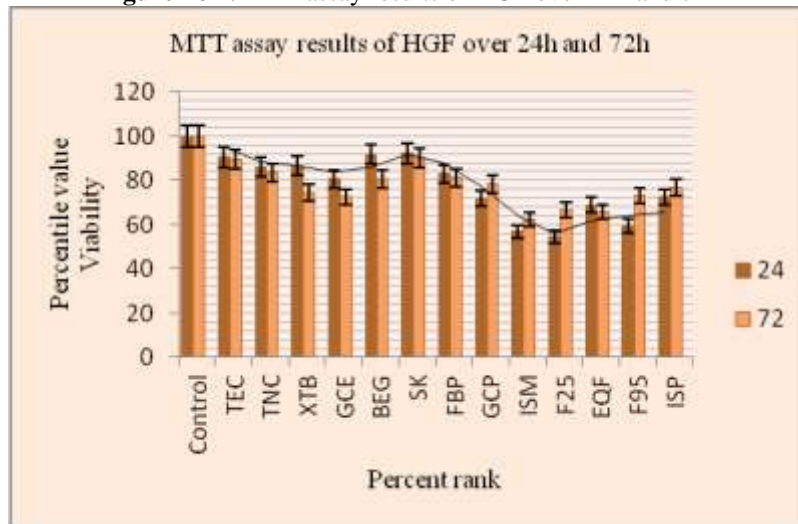
## **III. Result**

For the MTT assay, the viability of the control cultures (cells treated with growth media only) was adjust at 100 %. The viability of HGF, mesenchymal and neuron cells at 24 and 72 hours after treatment are shown in *Figure no 1*, in *Figure no 2*, and *Figure no 3*. The data obtained from the MTT assay are shown in *Table no 2*, *Table no 3* and *Table no 4*. When the viability rate of three different cells was evaluated after 24

and 72 hours, data showed that the viability of cells decreased as compared to the control (100% viability) at 24 and 72 hours.

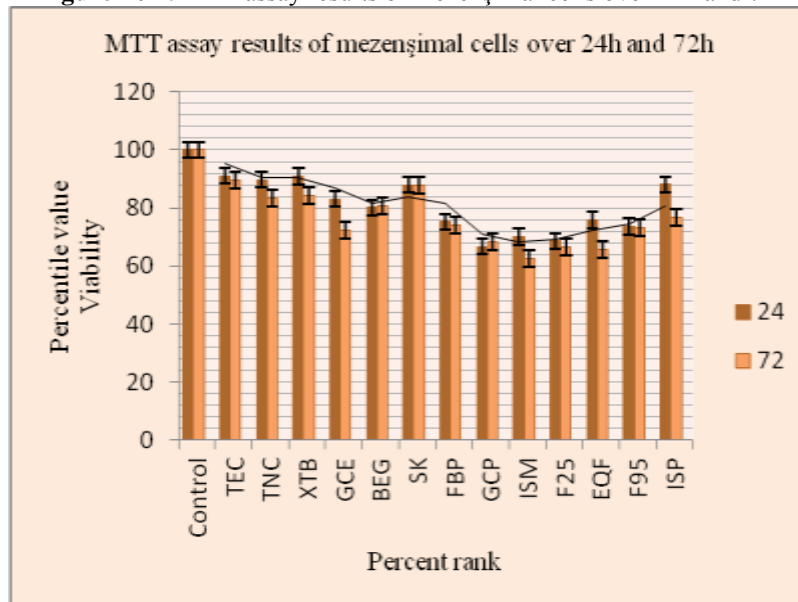
SK, BEG and TEG ejected for 24h and 72h showed almost no cytotoxic effect, while F25, ISM and F95 showed partial cytotoxic effect after 72 h. Also, when the cytotoxicity values obtained after 24 hours and 72 hours were analyzed and compared with the control group (culture medium only), no statistically significant difference was found ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Figure no 1.** MTT assay results of HGF over 24h and 72h



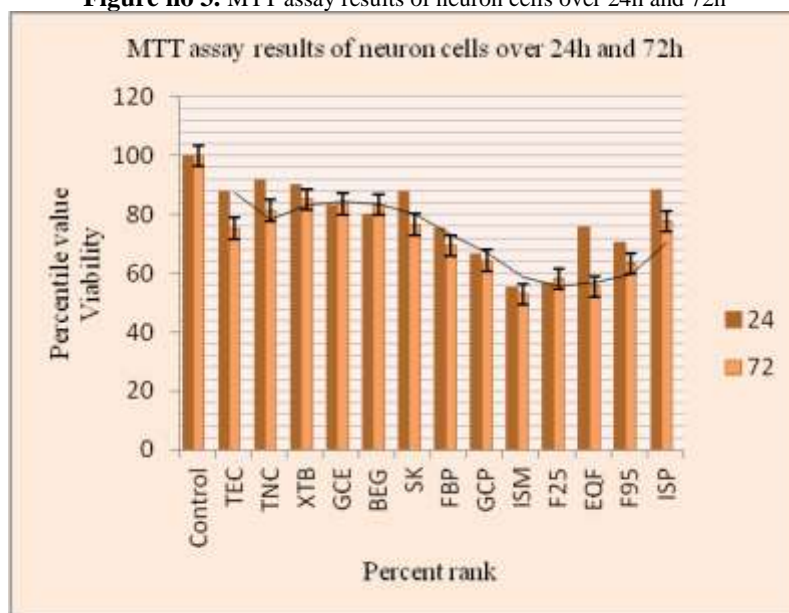
The effects of viability of HGF cells compared to controls at 24 and 72 hours after treatment. The results were calculated as the viability (percent control) compared to the negative control (100% viability) and presented as mean  $\pm$  SD.  $n=12$ , \*  $p < 0,05$ , \*\*  $p < 0,001$

**Figure no 2.** MTT assay results of mezenşimal cells over 24h and 72h



The effects of viability of mezenşimal cells compared to controls at 24 and 72 hours after treatment. The results were calculated as the viability (percent control) compared to the negative control (100% viability) and presented as mean  $\pm$  SD.  $n=12$ , \*  $p < 0,05$ , \*\*  $p < 0,001$

Figure no 3. MTT assay results of neuron cells over 24h and 72h



The effects of viability of neuron cells compared to controls at 24 and 72 hours after treatment. The results were calculated as the viability (percent control) compared to the negative control (100% viability) and presented as mean ± SD. n=12, \* p <0,05, \*\* p < 0,001

Table no 1: Materials used in this study

Materials	Manufacturer	Type	Organic Matrix	Filler % (Wt)	Code
<b>Tetric Evoceram®</b>	Ivoclar Vivadent AG, Schaan, Liechtenstein	Bulk Fill	Dimethacrylate Co-Monomers Bis-GMA, Bis-EMA And UDMA	80	TEC
<b>Tetric® N-Ceram</b>	Ivoclar Vivadent AG, Schaan, Liechtenstein	Bulk Fill	Bis-GMA, Bis-EMA And Urethane Dimethacrylate Monomer (UDMA),	75-77	TNC
<b>X-Tra Base</b>	Voco (Cuxhaven, Germany)	Bulk-Fill Flowable Composite	Bis-GMA, UDMA, TEGDMA	86	XTB
<b>G-Aenial</b>	GC Corporation, Tokyo, Japan	Microfilled Hybrid Composite	Urethane Dimethacrylate (UDMA), Dimethacrylate Co-Monomers.	76	GCE
<b>Brilliant</b>	Coltene, Altstaeten SG, Switzerland	(Nanohybrid Composite)	Bis-GMA, Bis-EMA, TEGDMA.	74	BEG
<b>Synergy</b>	Coltene, Altstaeten SG, Switzerland	(Nanohybrid Composite)	Bis-GMA, Bis-EMA And Urethane Dimethacrylate Monomer (UDMA),	77	SK
<b>Filtek Bulk Fill Posterior</b>	3M ESPE/ USA	Bulk Fill	UDMA, DDDMA, AUDMA	76,5	FBP
<b>GCP Glass Fill</b>	GCP Dental, Vianen, The Netherlands	Glass Carbomer	Fill:Fluoro-Aluminosilicate Glass, Apatite, Polyacids Gloss: Modified Polysiloxanes	-	GCP
<b>Ionostar Plus</b>	VOCO Gmbh, Cuxhaven, Germany Highly Viscous	<u>Glass-Ionomer Cements</u>	Fluoro-Aluminosilicate Glass 50-100% Polyacrylic Acid 10-25%, Tartaric Acid < 2.5%	-	ISP
<b>Ionostar Molar</b>	Voco Gmbh, Cuxhaven, Germany	<u>Glass-Ionomer Cements</u>	Powder: Fluoro-Alumino-Silicate Glass, Polyacrylic Acid Poder, Pigment Liquid: Polyacrylic Acid, Tartaric Acid, Distilled Water.	-	ISM
<b>Fuji II LC</b>	GC; Tokyo, Japan	<u>Glass-Ionomer Cements</u>	Liquid: Polyacrylic Acid Powder: Al2O3-Sio2-Caf2 Glass And HEMA Urethane Dimethacrylate	-	F2S
<b>GC Fuji IX</b>	GC Co, Tokyo, Japan	Conventional Glass-Ionomer	Powder: 95 % Strontium Fluoroalumino-Silicate Glass, 5 % Polyacrylic Acid	-	F9S

		Cement	Liquid: 40 % Aqueous Polyacrylic Acid		
<b>EQUIA Forte</b>	GC Co. Tokyo, Japan	Glass Hybrid	Powder: 95 % Strontium Fluoroalumino-Silicate Glass, 5 % Polyacrylic Acid Liquid: 40 % Aqueous Polyacrylic Acid	-	EQF

**Table no 2.** The parameters of MTT assay results of gingival fibroblast cells

	24		St. d	Sig	72		St.d	Sig
<b>Control</b>	100	±	4		100	±	4	
<b>TEC</b>	90,47	±	3,6		89,54	±	3,6	
<b>TNC</b>	86,25	±	2,9		83,51	±	2,9	
<b>XTB</b>	86,73	±	2	*	74,47	±	2	*
<b>GCE</b>	80,7	±	3,8		72,42	±	3,8	*
<b>BEG</b>	91,8	±	4,5		80,78	±	4,5	*
<b>SK</b>	92,28	±	3,8		89,97	±	3,8	
<b>FBP</b>	82,99	±	3,5		81,12	±	3,5	
<b>GCP</b>	71,69	±	2,6	*	78,31	±	2,6	*
<b>ISM</b>	56,78	±	1,9	**	62,43	±	1,9	**
<b>F25</b>	54,54	±	2	**	66,67	±	2	**
<b>EQF</b>	68,89	±	2,8	**	65,61	±	2,8	**
<b>F95</b>	59,39	±	1,5	**	73,02	±	1,5	*
<b>ISP</b>	72,45	±	2,8	*	76,72	±	2,8	*

Mean – Standard Deviation, Statistical significance level \* p <0,05, \*\* p < 0,001

**Table no 3.** The parameters of MTT assay results of mesenchymal cells

	24 h		St.d	Sig	72 h		St.d	Sig
<b>Control</b>	100	±	4,02		100	±	4,02	
<b>TEC</b>	91,05	±	3,59		89,54	±	3,59	
<b>TNC</b>	89,75	±	3,89		83,51	±	2,89	
<b>XTB</b>	90,92	±	4		84,47	±	4	
<b>GCE</b>	83,15	±	3,78		72,42	±	3,78	*
<b>BEG</b>	80,14	±	3,5		80,78	±	4	*
<b>SK</b>	87,87	±	3,8		87,97	±	3,8	
<b>FBP</b>	75,23	±	2,54	*	74,12	±	3,54	*
<b>GCP</b>	66,65	±	2,59	**	68,31	±	2,59	**
<b>ISM</b>	70,13	±	2,89	*	62,43	±	1,89	**
<b>F25</b>	68,65	±	2	**	66,67	±	2	**
<b>EQF</b>	75,83	±	2,78	*	65,61	±	2,78	**
<b>F95</b>	73,64	±	2,5	*	73,02	±	3	*
<b>ISP</b>	88,14	±	2,8		76,72	±	3,8	*

Mean – Standard Deviation, Statistical significance level \* p <0,05, \*\* p < 0,001

**Table no 4.** The parameters of MTT assay results of neuron cells

	24 h		St.d	Sig	72 h		St.d	Sig
<b>Control</b>	100	±	4,02		100	±	4,02	
<b>TEC</b>	88,05	±	3,59		75,3	±	2,59	*
<b>TNC</b>	91,75	±	3,89		81,3	±	3,89	
<b>XTB</b>	89,92	±	4		85,2	±	4	
<b>GCE</b>	83,15	±	3,78		83,5	±	3,78	
<b>BEG</b>	80,14	±	3,5	*	83,2	±	3,5	
<b>SK</b>	87,87	±	3,8		76,6	±	3,8	*
<b>FBP</b>	75,23	±	2,54	*	69,5	±	2,54	*
<b>GCP</b>	66,65	±	2,59	**	64,4	±	2,59	**
<b>ISM</b>	55,13	±	1,89	**	52,9	±	2,89	**
<b>F25</b>	56,65	±	2	**	58,1	±	2	**
<b>EQF</b>	75,83	±	2,78	*	55,5	±	2,78	**
<b>F95</b>	70,64	±	2,5	*	63,3	±	2,5	**

ISP	88,14	±	2,8		77,8	±	2,8	*
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Mean – Standard Deviation, Statistical significance level \* p <0,05, \*\* p< 0,001

#### IV. Discussion

In the treatment of teeth with fillings, different restorative materials (Composites, glass ionomer cement and flowable composites, etc.) with improved physical, chemical and biological properties are used. Most of these materials consist of a polymerizable organic resin matrix and particulate ceramic reinforcement fillers bonded with a silane coupling agent<sup>21-23</sup>.

The biocompatibility of the materials used is important for the success of the process. While evaluating the biocompatibility of restorative materials, cell culture studies are easy to apply, controllable, reproducible and less costly<sup>24</sup>.

In this study, the effects of different brands of restorative materials on stem cells were examined by MTT assay.

The oral cavity and its surroundings are covered with keratinocytes. In the lower layer, it is filled with connective tissue, lamina propria and gingival fibroblasts<sup>25</sup>. Dental filling materials are usually in contact with oral epithelial cells. If the biochemical components in its content penetrate the epithelium, it can interact with stem cells such as fibroblasts. Thus they can cause toxic effects.<sup>26</sup>

Fibroblastic stem cells are the predominant cell type in the pulp and can be affected by substances released from filling materials if the odontoblastic layer is deformed<sup>27</sup>.

Human dental pulp stem cells are frequently used in cytotoxic studies because they can be easily obtained from extracted teeth, have no ethical problems, and are long-lasting<sup>28,29</sup>. In our study, mesenchymal cells and neuron cells were used as well as dental pulp cells and the toxic differences between them were evaluated.

As mentioned above, mouse fibroblast cells, namely L929 cells, are frequently used in the biological evaluation of dental materials in in vitro studies due to their ease of use<sup>30,31</sup>. In this study, unlike fibroblast cells, mesenchymal cells and neuron cells were also used. Thus, the effect of three different stem cells on cytotoxicity was evaluated in the same study.

In this study, we performed standard tests MTT (3-(4,5-Dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide) assays for cytotoxic evaluations of thirteen dental restorative materials<sup>32</sup>. MTT test is often used to assess cell proliferation and neural toxicity<sup>33</sup>. This test has often been described in the literature and is reliable, reproducible, results in a short time, and is more reliable than other tests<sup>34</sup>. This use has been frequently described in the literature and is reliable, reproducible, and more sensitive than other colorimetric analyzes<sup>35</sup>.

Here, we show that TEG, BEG and SK is significantly less cytotoxic to mesenchymal, neuron and human gingival fibroblasts cells, than GCP and F25. In literature studies, the toxic effects of resin-containing composite materials depend on many factors such as the degree of conversion after polymerization, the number of unbound free monomers, the release of ions over time, and microleakage<sup>36</sup>.

In this study, when the findings were analyzed, the direct ratio between the cytotoxicity of the materials and the filler rate was determined. For example, TEC's filler rate (80%) is higher than other materials. Cell viability rate of TEC was found higher than the other groups after 24 and 72 hours. It was observed that the cell viability rate of GCP (glass ionomers are known to have a low filling ratio) was lower after 24 and 72 hours. In the light of this information, it was concluded that as the filler ratio increases, the toxic effect on the cell decreases.

In this study, samples were light cured for 20 s. This time allows for a high degree of conversion of materials and a small amount of elutable material. Although it is not possible to know exactly what percent of the conversion rate is, there are unbound monomers when considering the literature studies<sup>37</sup>.

Table 1 shows the monomers showing the cytotoxic properties of the materials. Bis GMA has a cytotoxic effect on stem cells<sup>38</sup>.

TEGDMA induces apoptotic proteins in pulp fibroblasts<sup>39,40</sup>. UDMA exerts cytotoxic and growth inhibitory effects by inducing reactive oxygen species, which is an important cause of thiol reduction and cell damage in cells<sup>41</sup>.

Analyzing the monomer elution from bulk-fill and conventional resin-containing composites using liquid chromatography, it was observed that it separated BisGMA, BisEMA and TEGDMA from conventional composites<sup>37,42</sup>. It can be thought that the amounts of the above-mentioned unbound monomers are responsible for the more toxic effects of some of the materials used in our study.

Interestingly, when the results of HGF, mesenchymal and neuron cells were evaluated, it was seen that HGF and neuron cells had similar results, and had more toxic effects than mesenchymal cells.

Remarkably, cell viability rates of HGF in specimens with F25, ISM, F95, GCP, ISP were as part of higher after 72 h than after 24 h. This finding suggests the possibility that stem cells in contact with composite materials proliferate and the potential for cytotoxicity decreases in some resin-containing composite materials.

A similar situation was detected when the viability of mesenchymal and neuron cells was examined after 72 hours.

Studies have shown the detrimental effects of resin-containing composites on osteoblastic cells<sup>43</sup>. ISM had values close to 56.78%, which was at the limit of severe cytotoxicity, while F95 had values of around 59.35% and could be considered moderately cytotoxic. While ISM had values close to 56.78%, which was at the cytotoxicity limit, F95 had values around 59.35% and could be considered as moderately cytotoxic. XTB, SNC had values considered mildly cytotoxic. None of the materials were classified as "non-cytotoxic" in this test. To our knowledge, there is no similar study examining the viability of three different stem cells in the same study, and this effect should be investigated for longer than 72 hours.

The cytotoxicities of the materials are categorized according to ISO standard 10993-5:2009; non-cytotoxic or slightly, moderately or highly cytotoxic<sup>43</sup>. In this study, the toxic effect of resin-containing composite materials was evaluated as more or less toxic. In this study, the most harmful effects of composites were determined as neuron cells, HGF cells and Mesenchymal cells, respectively.

When the toxicity of three different cells after 24 and 72 hours was evaluated, it was seen that the bulk fill composites were less toxic. Similar results were also found in studies by different researchers<sup>43</sup>. When cytotoxicity studies were examined in the literature, none of the materials were defined as non-toxic, they were defined as less toxic or more toxic.

In this study, we showed that composite materials TNC, XTB, SK and BEG were significantly less cytotoxic to HGF, mesenchymal and neuron stem cells using the MTT assay. More research is needed in the future to confirm these in vitro results. SK may represent a crucial technological advance in overcoming the adverse biocompatibility of resin-based dental restorative materials.

Contrary to the adverse effect of F25 ve ISM on HGF cells and neuron cells, a similar effect was not identified in the mesenchymal stem cells. Low cytotoxic effect was seen for mesenchymal cell lines. BisGMA, UDMA and TEGDMA, which are found in almost all materials, are thought to cause DNA strand breaks in HGF cells [55], thus these materials cause toxic effects<sup>44</sup>.

In a recent study, the cytotoxic values of Tetric N-Ceram Bulk-Fil, Xtrafil, and Xtrabase composite resins were examined. The cytotoxicity was evaluated by MTT test on HGF. Tetric N-Ceram Bulk-fill composite resin was found to have higher toxicity<sup>45</sup>. In this study, Tetric N-Ceram Bulk-Fil and Xtrabase composite resin were analyzed to have similar toxic effects.

Putzeys et al<sup>46, 47</sup>. In his study, BisGMA, UDMA, TEGDMA were separated from the Filtek™ Supreme XTE structure. Filtek™ Supreme XTE in contact with human gingival keratinocytes caused a decrease in interleukin 6 secretion. This indicates a defense against infections. that is, this material was found to have a toxic effect. In our study, however, it was observed that Filtek™ Supreme had little toxic effect and increased cell viability in stem cells after 72 hours.

In a study by Cosgun et al.,<sup>48</sup> they found that the materials evaluated in terms of cytotoxicity after 24 hours did not show any toxic effect, and after 72 hours, Zirconomer, EQUIA Forte, Fuji IX and Fuji II showed statistically significantly lower cell viability values compared to the control group. Similarly, in our study, EQUIA Forte, Fuji IX and Fuji II were found to have toxic properties. As a result of the study, it was seen that glass ionomer cements had more toxic effects.

## V. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that there was a decrease in cell viability over time. In addition, it was observed that dental composite materials had less toxic effects on mesenchymal cells and more toxic effects on neuron and human gingival fibroblast cells.

## VI. Declaration by Authors

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