

# Mjerenje jakosti fotopolimerizacijskih uređaja u kliničkoj uporabi

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## Sažetak

*Vidljivo svjetlo, odgovarajuće valne duljine i dostatnog intenziteta, od esencijalnog je značenja za adekvatnu polimerizaciju svjetlom stvrdnjavajućih kompozitnih smola. Vrijeme ekspozicije pri polimerizaciji površine kompozitnog materijala je značajan čimbenik. Svjetlo se u kompozitnom materijalu apsorbira i raspršuje, a njegova jakost u materijalu s dubinom opada, te će intenzitet svjetla u dubljim slojevima biti dominantniji čimbenik za dostatni stupanj konverzije. Da bi se dobio uvid u stanje halogenih žarulja koje se svakodnevno rabe u kliničkom radu, ispitivani su polimerizacijski uređaji u stomatološkim ambulancama na području grada Zagreba. Testirane su 83 halogene žarulje pomoću Curing Radiometra. Rezultati su pokazali da 44% uređaja ima manju jakost izlaznog intenziteta svjetla od dostatne za stvrdnjavanje kompozitnih materijala.*

**Ključne riječi:** kompozitni materijali, polimerizacija, polimerizacijski uređaji

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## Uvod

Materijal (sastav, boja), izvor svjetla (intenzitet, vrijeme ekspozicije, veličina spektra) i rukovanje (udaljenost i orijentacija izvora svjetla) zajedno utječu na stupanj i dubinu polimerizacije te na fizičko-mehanička svojstva kompozitnih materijala (1,2). Nekoliko je istraživanja pokazalo da uređaj za polimerizaciju ima veliku važnost za dobre kliničke rezultate i dugotrajnost svjetlom polimerizirajućih kompozitnih smola. Tu se nameću dva problema: prvo, nemoguće je vizualno odrediti intenzitet svjetla koji je optimalan za stvrdnjavanje; drugo, klinički se ne može razlučiti između dobro i loše osvijetljena materijala, jer čak i vrlo slab izvor svjetlo-

sti može stvrdnuti površinu kompozita jednako dobro kao i jači izvor svjetlosti. Zato tvrdoća površine nije prikladan klinički kriterij za stupanj polimerizacije jer dublji dijelovi mogu ostati nedostavno stvrdnuti (3). Smatra se da uređaji za polimerizaciju intenziteta manjeg od 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup> nisu za uporabu (4).

Varijacije u intenzitetu svjetla pojedinih uređaja mogu biti uzrokovane raznim čimbenicima:

- varijacijama u voltaži
- oštećenjem bulbusa
- oštećenjem ili onečišćenjem filtra (5,6)
- oštećenjem ili onečišćenjem otpiškoga voda (7)

- oštećenjem vlakana optičkoga snopa (8)
- reducirana emisija svjetla zbog učestale sterilizacije (9,10).

Svrha ovoga rada bila je, uz pomoć radiometra, utvrditi jakost izlaznog intenziteta svjetla uređaja za polimerizaciju u stomatološkim ambulancama na području grada Zagreba.

### Materijali i postupci

Izmjerena je jakost izlaznog intenziteta svjetla kod ukupno 83 standardna uređaja za fotopolimerizaciju kompozitnih materijala koji su u uporabi u stomatološkim ordinacijama na području grada Zagreba. Ukupan broj i vrsta testiranih uređaja prikazan je u Tablici 1.

Tablica 1. Ukupan broj i vrsta ispitivanih polimerizacijskih uređaja u kliničkoj uporabi u stomatološkim ambulancama na području grada Zagreba

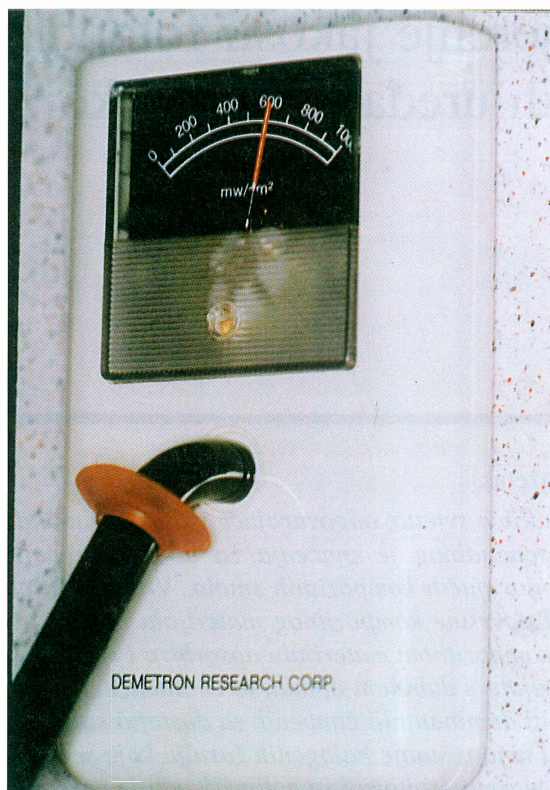
Table 1. Total number and typ of tested light-curing units in clinical use in dental offices in Zagreb

Skupina Group	Lampa Curing unit	Proizvođač Manufacturer	Ukup. br. Total number
1.	Heliomat	Vivadent, Liechtenstein	16
2.	Elipar II	ESPE, Germany	13
3.	Heliolux GTE	Vivadent, Liechtenstein	9
4.	Heliolux DLX	Vivadent, Liechtenstein	6
5.	Heliolux II	Vivadent, Liechtenstein	11
6.	Elipar Highlight	ESPE, Germany	6
7.	Vivalux	Vivadent, Liechtenstein	9
8.	Ostali	Vivadent, Liechtenstein	14

Intenzitet halogenih žarulja za polimerizaciju određen je Curing Radiometrom Model 100 (Demetron Research Corporation, Danbury, CT, USA) (Slika 1). Vrijednosti mjerenja, izražene u  $\text{mW}/\text{cm}^2$ , očitane su na baždarenoj skali radiometra na početku mjerenja i nakon 40 sekundi prislanjanjem optičkoga voda halogene žarulje na otvor na kućištu radiometra.

### Rezultati

Dobiveni rezultati mjerenja raščlanjeni su deskriptivnom statistikom i prikazani u histogramu i "box & whisker plotu" (Tablica 2).



Slika 1. Curing Radiometar Model 100 (Demetron Research Corporation, Danbury, CT, USA)

Figure 1. Curing Radiometer Model 100 (Demetron Research Corporation, Danbury, CT, USA)

Tablica 2. Legenda za histogramске prikaze

Table 2. Legend for histograms

Početna vrijednost <ili> od 233 $\text{mW}/\text{cm}^2$ Measured values at the beginning <or> from 233 $\text{mW}/\text{cm}^2$	Vrijednost nakon 40s, <ili> od 233 $\text{mW}/\text{cm}^2$ Measured values after 40s <or> from 233 $\text{mW}/\text{cm}^2$	Skupina Group
<	<	0 (crvena) NE (red)
>	<	1 (narandasta) NE (orange)
<	>	2 (svijetlo zelena) DA (light green)
>	>	3 (tamno zelena) DA (dark green)

Legenda: klinički uporabivi uređaji za polimerizaciju intenziteta  $\approx 233 \text{ mW}/\text{cm}^2$

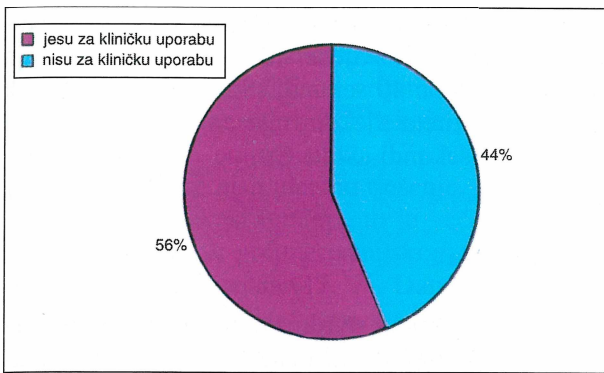
NE - nisu za kliničku uporabu

DA - primjerene za kliničku uporabu

Legend: clinical useful curing units intensity  $\approx 233 \text{ mW}/\text{cm}^2$

NE - not for clinical use

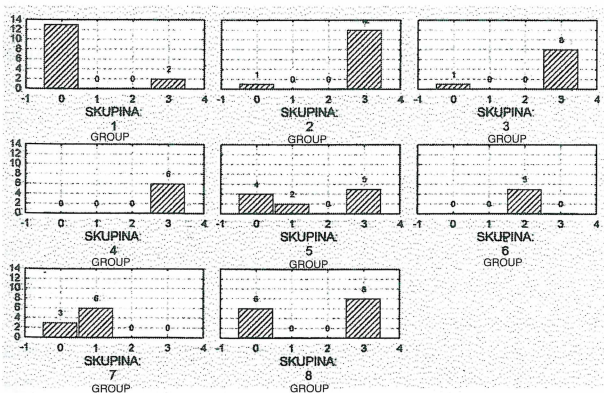
DA - adequate for clinical use



Slika 2. Ukupan broj ispitivanih polimerizacijskih uređaja prikladan i neprikladan za kliničku uporabu izražen u postotcima

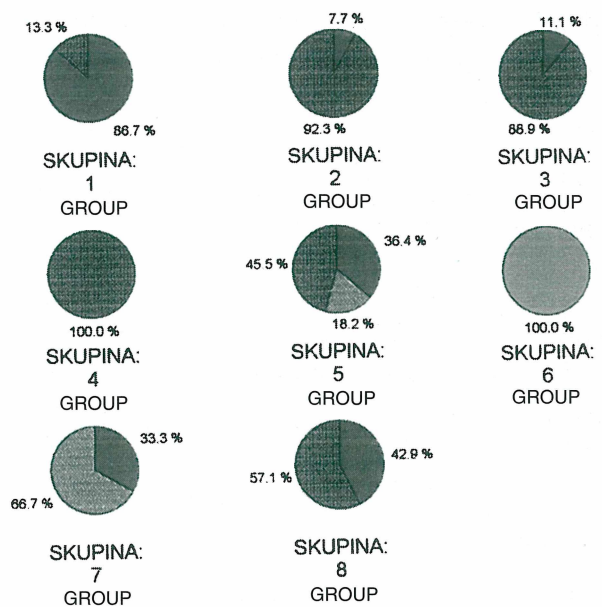
Figure 2. Total number of adequate and inadequate tested units for clinical use in percentages  
 ■ for clinical use  
 □ not for clinical use

Slika 2 pokazuje koliki je ukupan postotak ispitivanih svjetiljki prikladan za kliničku uporabu (intenzitet veći ili jednak 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>), a koliki nije. Slika 3 daje prikaz broja uređaja iz pojedine skupine koji zadovoljavaju kliničke uvjete uporabe (jakost veća ili jednaka 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>) a koji ne zadovoljavaju. U histogramu na Slici 4 dani su isti podatci izraženi u postotcima. Iz dobivenih je rezultata vidljivo da je za kliničku uporabu primjenjivo 56% ispitivanih uređaja. Raščlanjujući rezultate po skupinama uređaja, vidljivo je da je najviše uređaja prikladno za kliničku uporabu u skupini 4 (Helio-lux DLX) i u skupini 6 (Elipar Highlight - 100%),



Slika 3. Histogramski prikaz broja uređaja svake skupine prikladnih i neprikladnih za kliničku uporabu

Figure 3. Histogram of the number of curing units in each group which are adequate and inadequate for clinical use

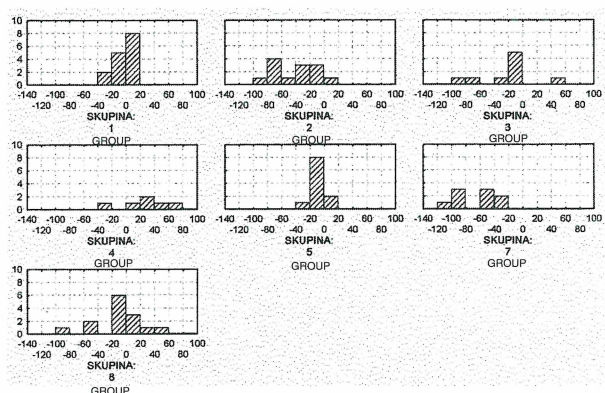


Slika 4. Prikaz broja uređaja svake skupine prikladnih i neprikladnih za kliničku uporabu izražen u postotcima

Figure 4. Number of curing units in each group which are adequate and inadequate for clinical use in percentages

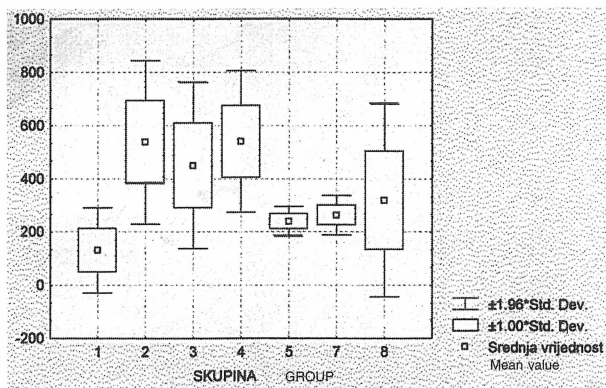
a da je najviše uređaja koji nisu za kliničku uporabu u skupini 1 (Heliomat) i iznosi 86,7%, te u skupini 7 (Vivalux II) - 66,7%. U toj je skupini početna vrijednost nekih polimerizacijskih uređaja veća ili jednaka 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>, ali opada nakon 40 sekundi na vrijednosti ispod 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>.

Porast ili pad intenziteta jakosti žarulja nakon 40 sekundi u odnosu prema početnoj vrijednosti po skupinama uređaja za polimerizaciju prikazan je u histogramu na Slici 5.



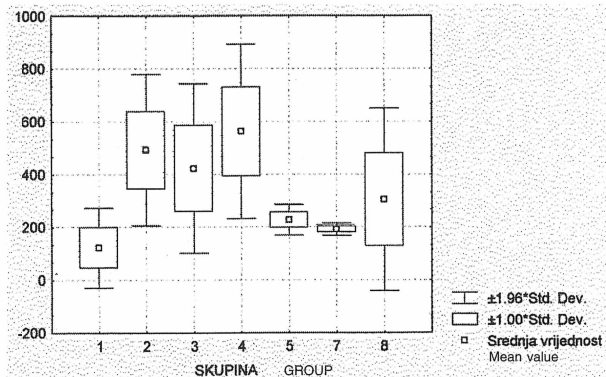
Slika 5. Histogramski prikaz porasta i pada intenziteta halogenih žarulja tijekom 40 sekundi za skupine 1-5, 7 i 8

Figure 5. Histogram of increase and decrease of light-curing unit intensity during 40 s. for Groups 1-5, 7 and 8



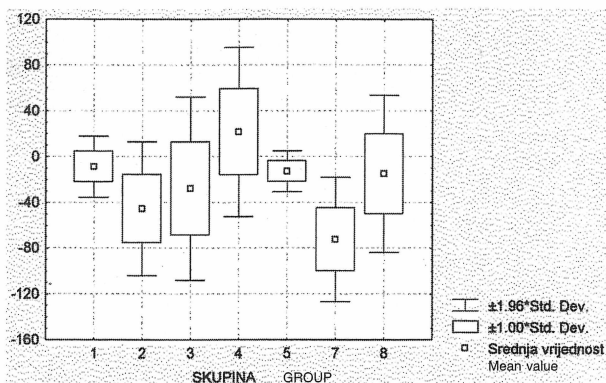
Slika 6. Odstupanja od srednjih vrijednosti na početku mjerenja (skupine 1-5, 7 i 8)

Figure 6. Deviation from the mean value at the beginning of the measurement (Groups 1-5, 7 and 8)



Slika 7. Odstupanja od srednjih vrijednosti na kraju mjerenja (skupine 1-5, 7 i 8)

Figure 7. Deviation from the mean value at the end of the measurement (Groups 1-5, 7 and 8)



Slika 8. Odstupanja porasta/pada u intervalu od 0-40 sekundi od srednjih vrijednosti (skupine 1-5, 7 i 8)

Figure 8. Deviation of the increase/decrease in the interval from 0-40 s. from the mean value (Groups 1-5, 7 and 8)

U "box & whisker plot" prikazu dana su odstupanja od srednjih vrijednosti na početku mjerenja (Slika 6), nakon 40 sekundi (Slika 7), i pad ili pak porast intenziteta tijekom mjerenja u razdoblju od nula do 40 sekundi (Slika 8).

## Rasprava

Dostatna dubina stvrdnjavanja svjetlom polimerizirajućih kompozitnih materijala ovisi o intenzitetu svjetla i vremenu osvjetljavanja te o svojstvima materijala i drugim u uvodu spomenutim čimbenicima. Za razliku od intenziteta, vrijeme osvjetljavanja razmjerno je lako kontrolirati.

Uređaji za polimerizaciju kompozitnih materijala vidljivim svjetlom emitiraju spektar valne duljine između 400 i 515 nm (11). Prema rezultatima Berrya i suradnika (12) velik broj halogenih žarulja u kliničkoj uporabi nemaju dostatnu energiju, a produženim vremenom osvjetljavanja ne može se dobiti kompenzacija. Smatraju da je nepotpuna polimerizacija kompozitnih materijala glavni uzrok koji nepovoljno utječe na kakvoću i trajnost kompozitnog ispuna.

Hansen i Asmussen (13) utvrdili su da ne postoji ovisnost između mikrotvrdoće površine i dubine stvrdnjavanja, a Peutzfeld (14) upozorava na znatnu linearnu ovisnost između intenziteta svjetla i stupnja konverzije svjetlosno polimerizirajućih kompozitnih smola.

Shortall i suradnici (9) pokazuju u svojim istraživanjima da su za svjetlom stvrdnjavajuće kompozitne materijale stupanj konverzije i dubina stvrdnjavanja uvelike ovisni o intenzitetu svjetla za polimerizaciju. Zbog raspršenja i apsorpcije svjetla u kompozitnom materijalu, jakost svjetla za polimerizaciju važan je parametar za dostatnu konverziju dubljih slojeva kompozitnih materijala (1,15). Svojstva materijala kao što su optička translucencija i indeks refrakcije povećat će količinu raspršenja svjetla, a time i ograničiti dubinu polimerizacije (10).

U ovom ispitivanju 56% od ukupnoga broja ispitanih uređaja zadovoljava kliničke uvjete uporabe, što znači da im je jakost izlaznog intenziteta svjetla veća ili jednaka 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>. U kliničkim uvjetima u kojima je intenzitet halogene žarulje manji od optimalnog, proporcionalno povećanje vremena osvjetljavanja može samo do određene granice biti kompenzacija za nedostatnu jakost izlaznoga svjetla (16).

Tako produženo vrijeme stvrdnjavanja osigurat će optimalna fizičko-mehanička svojstva materijala s jedne strane, no, produženo vrijeme stvrdnjavanja povećava i vrijeme zagrijavanja koje pak ima štetne posljedice za pulpno tkivo (17). Osim toga, ni prejake svjetiljke nisu idealno rješenje, jer znano je da što je jača jakost uređaja, to je veće zagrijavanje, veći nastanak polimerizacijskog stresa i veće je skupljanje materijala (17,18). Danas se prednost daje halogenim žaruljama tzv. "soft-start" tipa koje u početnoj fazi osvjetljavanja (prvih 10-20 s) emitiraju svjetlo niskog intenziteta (oko 100 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>) a zatim im se jakost sljedećih 20-30s povećava. Upravo u tome početnom vremenu polaganog stvrdnjavanja omogućeno je otjecanje materijala u pregelacijskoj fazi, čime se ublažava nastanak stresa (napetosti u samome materijalu i na spoju sa tvrdim zubnim tkivom), za razliku od druge faze (postgelacijska faza) gdje materijal postaje krući i nema više mogućnost otjecanja. Svjetiljke jačeg intenziteta brže dovode materijal u postgelacijsko stanje, a one slabijeg intenziteta od optimalnog, ovisno opet o jakosti halogene žarulje, debljini sloja materijala, udaljenosti od izvora svjetla, ostavljaju dosta slobodnih molekula monomera (19,20).

Pri mjerenju intenziteta halogenih žarulja očita na je vrijednost na baždarnoj skali radiometra na početku i na kraju mjerenja (nakon 40 sekundi). Neki polimerizacijski uređaji pokazali su pad intenziteta tijekom 40 sekundi osvjetljavanja, a neki porast. Kod uređaja iz skupine 6 (Elipar Highlight), budući da se radi o izvoru svjetlosti tzv. "soft-start" tipa, pretpostavlja se mnogo veći porast intenziteta svjetla u odnosu prema početnoj vrijednosti. S obzirom na to taj uređaj nije uzet u obzir pri razmatranju odstupanja od srednjih vrijednosti na početku mjerenja, na kraju, te u intervalu od 0 do 40 sekundi. Najveći broj uređaja koji nisu za uporabu jest u skupini 1 (Heliomat). Iako su to najstariji uređaji, iz brojčanih podataka u Tablici 1 vidljivo je da su oni, na žalost, još uvijek najzastupljeniji. Uz uporabu uređaja čija je jakost manja od 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup> i time nedostatna za polimerizaciju slojeva kompozitnog materijala debljih od 1 mm (što je u kliničkim uvjetima teško aplicirati), nastanak mikropukotine, diskoloracija rubova kompozitnog ispuna, nekroza pulpe (zbog štetnog utjecaja nevezanoga rezidualnog monomera, te i zbog prodora bakterija kroz mikropukotinu nastalu od skupljanja materijala tijekom procesa polimerizacije), te aplikacija debljih slojeva kompozitnog materijala, razlog su "de-

gradacije" kompozitnog materijala, osobito kada je riječ o njihovoj uporabi kao alternativni amalgamima u području distalnih zuba.

### Zaključak

Samo 56% svjetiljka od ukupnog ispitivanog broja zadovoljava kliničke uvjete primjene (intenzitet > ili = 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>). Zato, da bi se uz takvo stanje halogenih žarulja osigurala dostatna polimerizacija, potrebno je:

1. redovito nadzirati jakost intenziteta halogenih žarulja (budući da im sa starošću jakost slabi),
2. polimerizirati iz dva svjetlosna izvora,
3. u kavitet nanositi kompozitni materijal u slojevima debelim 1 do 2 mm,
4. rabiti reflektirajuće kolčiće i celuloidne matrice,
5. do razumne granice produžiti vrijeme stvrdnjavanja kompozitnog materijala.

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# Measurement of Light-Curing Unit Intensity in Clinical Practice

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## Summary

*Appropriate wavelength and intensity of visible light is essential for adequate polymerization of visible-light curing composite resins. Exposure time is an important factor for polymerization of the composite resin surface, while, due to light absorption and scattering of light in the composite material, light intensity becomes the most important factor in the deeper layer, to ensure a satisfactory degree of conversion. Curing units are tested to evaluate the condition of the curing light, used in everyday dental practice in Zagreb. Eighty-three curing units were tested by the Curing Radiometer. The results revealed that 44% of the curing units have less light intensity than necessary for composite material polymerization.*

**Key words:** *composite materials, polymerization, curing units.*

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## Introduction

Material (composition, colour), light-source (intensity, exposure time, emissive spectrum), and operator factors (distance and orientation of the light source) concomitantly affect the degree of polymerization and physical properties of composites (1,2). A few studies have shown that the curing unit is the most important factor for good clinical results and longevity of light polymerized composite resins. There are two essential problems: first, it is impossible to determine visually the intensity of a curing unit in the optimal curing range. Second, the clinician cannot distinguish between a well-cured and an inferiorly cured resin, because even a very poor light source can polymerize the surface of a restorative resin as well as an effective one. The

surface hardness is not adequate clinical criteria, because a hard surface may conceal inferior or even unpolymerized resin in the deeper part of the cavity (3). It is believed that curing units with light intensity of less than 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup> are not recommended for clinical use (4).

The variation in the light intensity of curing units may be caused by different factors:

- variation in line voltage
- bulb deterioration
- ageing or filter contamination (5,6)
- ageing or optic guide wear contamination (7)
- ageing of optic fibres (8)
- light emission reduction caused by frequent sterilisation (9,10).

The purpose this study was to measure the light intensity output of visible light curing units for composite resin polymerization, by using radiometers, in dental practices in Zagreb.

## Materials and methods

The light intensity of 83 standard curing units for composite material photopolymerization used in dental practices in Zagreb was measured. The total number and type of the tested curing units is shown in Table 1.

Curing unit intensity was determined by using Curing Radiometer Model 100 (Demetron Research Corporation, Danbury, CT, USA) (Figure 1). The measured values expressed in  $\text{mW}/\text{cm}^2$  are represented on the scale of the Radiometer at the beginning of illumination and after 40 s. holding the optic guideline of the curing unit on the radiometer aperture.

## Results

The measured values were analysed by descriptive statistics and presented in histograms and "box and whisker plots" (Table 2).

Figure 2 shows the total percentage of adequate (light intensity higher or equal to  $233 \text{ mW}/\text{cm}^2$ ) and in adequate curing units tested in clinical conditions. Figure 3 shows the number of curing units in each group which are adequate for clinical use and those which are not. In Figure 4 a histogram shows the same values in percentages. The results show that 56% of the tested curing units are adequate for clinical use. Analysing the results of each group of curing units it can be seen that the highest number of curing units adequate for clinical use are in Group 4 (Heliolux DLX - 100%) and Group 6 (Elipar Highlight - 100%), and the highest number of lamps which inadequate for clinical use are in Group 1 (Heliomat - 86.7%) and Group 7 (Vivalux II - 66.7%). In this group the values of light intensity of some curing units were initially higher or equal to  $233 \text{ mW}/\text{cm}^2$ , but decreased after 40 s. to values of less than recommended.

Increase or decrease of halogen lamp intensity after 40 s. illumination in relation to the initial values, are shown according to photopolymerization

for groups of curing units in the histogram in Figure 5.

Deviation from the initial mean values are shown in "box and whisker plot's (Figure 6), after 40 s. (Figure 7) and decreased or increased light intensity during the period from 0 to 40 s. (Figure 8).

## Discussion

Effective curing depth of light-cured composite materials depends on the light intensity and exposure time as well as on the material characteristic and other factors. Unlike intensity, exposure time is relatively easy to control.

Visible light photoactivating units usually emit wavelength spectra of between 400 and 515 nm (11). According to the results of Berry et al (12) many current light-activating units do not produce adequate energy and increased irradiation time may not compensate for this. They report that incomplete curing of composite is a common cause of restoration failure.

Hansen and Asmussen (13) found that there is no correlation between the surface microhardness and the depth of cure, whereas Peutzfeld (14) reported a significant linear correlation between the light intensity and the degree of conversion of light-cured composite resins.

Shortall et al (9) demonstrated that radiation intensity of a dental light activation source has a significant effect on the depth of cure and on the degree of conversion. Because light is absorbed and scattered in the composite, intensity of the light source is the most critical factor for adequate conversion at increasing distance below the composite surface (1,15). Material factors such as optical translucency and refractive index of the composite will govern the amount of light scattering, and hence, limit the depth of polymerization. (10).

In this investigation 56% of the total number of curing units were adequate for clinical use, i. e. intensity was higher or equal to the recommended value of  $233 \text{ mW}/\text{cm}^2$ . In clinical conditions where the curing unit intensity is less than optimal, proportional increase of curing time may be compensation for inadequate light curing intensity only to a certain degree (16). Excessive curing time will enhance the physical properties of the material up to



the optimal limit. However, extending the curing light application time increases the period of heat generation what can lead to damage of pulp tissue (17). Furthermore, stronger lamps are also not ideal, because they induce higher heating, polymerization stress and polymerization shrinkage (17,18). So-called "soft-start" polymerization units are popular today, i. e. at first (first 10 to 20 s.) lower light intensity is emitted (about 100 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>) after which 20 to 30 s. the light intensity increases. In this first period of a relatively slow setting process the material is able to flow (which can compensate for the stress in the material or in the material junction with hard tooth tissue), in contrast to the second phase when the material becomes stiffer and is unable to flow. Curing units with higher intensity causes the material to quickly reach the postgelation phase, while those of less intensity than optimal, due to the power output of the curing unit, thickness of material and distance from the light source, leave several unreacted monomer molecules (19,20).

During measurement of curing unit intensity, the values were expressed on a radiometer scale at the beginning and at end of the measurement (after 40 s.). Some units have shown decrease and some an increase of intensity during the 40 s. illumination. In the light curing units in the Group 6 (Elipar Highlight) characterised by "soft-start" regime, a much higher increase in light intensity was expected compared to the start of the measurement. Therefore, this cannot be included in the description of deviations in the mean values at the beginning, end and in the interval from 0 to 40 seconds. The highest number of units inadequate for clinical use were fo-

und in Group 1 (Heliomat). The reason for such disappointing results could be the long period of their use. As can be seen in Table 1, unfortunately, the oldest units are those most frequently used. Use of units with intensity of less than 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>, in other words inadequate for curing composite material layers thicker than 1 mm, microleakage, discoloration of composite filling, pulp necrosis (because of the influence of unreacted residual monomer and because of bacteria contamination through the microleakage caused by polymerization shrinkage), and application of thicker layers of composite material, can cause composite material degradation, especially when they are used as an alternative to amalgam.

### Conclusion

Only 56% of the total number of tested curing units were adequate for clinical use (light intensity > or = 233 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>). Therefore, to achieve an adequate degree of conversion using curing units with unknown light intensity, it is necessary to:

- regularly check the light intensity of curing units (because the light intensity decreases with time)
- polymerize from two light sources
- increment placement of composite materials no thicker than 1 - 2 mm
- use reflective wedges and celluloid matrices
- prolong illumination time to reasonable limits
- use the light sources of the most efficient wavelength.