



Biomechanics effect of two implant system with different bone height under axial and non-axial loading conditions

Efeito biomecânico de dois sistemas de implante com diferentes alturas ósseas sob condições de carregamento axial e não-axial

Efecto biomecánico de dos sistemas de implantes con diferentes alturas óseas en condiciones de carga axial y no-axial

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this current *in silico* study was to evaluate the influence of axial and non-axial loads on unitary implant-supported implants, with external hexagon or Morse-taper connection in two different bone level, using finite element analysis. Two implant models with the same length (13 x 3.75 mm) were analyzed according to the prosthetic connection (external hexagon or morse Taper) and bone height (bone level or 5 mm of bone loss). Both implant systems received screw-retained metallic crowns in chromium-cobalt. The peri-implant tissue was simulated as an isotropic material (polyurethane resin). The polyurethane block has been fixed and a load of 300 N was applied on the occlusal surface in two different directions (Axial or Non-axial) for each implant model and bone condition. The results were analyzed in terms of von-Mises stress and bone microstrain. The materials were considered isotropic, homogeneous, linear and elastic. The results showed that there is no difference regarding the prosthetic connection for the generated stress and strain under the same load incidence. However, bone loss and non-axial loadings increased the stress and strain magnitude regardless the prosthetic connections. In conclusion, the load incidence is more prone to modify the implant stress and bone microstrain than the prosthetic connection. In addition, the higher the bone loss the higher the stress and strain magnitude generated, regardless the loading condition.

Keywords: Dental implants. Finite element analysis. Peri-implantitis. Stress.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste presente estudo *in silico* foi avaliar a influência das cargas axiais e não axiais em implantes unitários, com hexágono externo ou conexão cone-Morse em dois níveis ósseos distintos, utilizando análise por elementos finitos. Dois modelos de implantes com o mesmo comprimento (13 x 3,75 mm) foram analisados de acordo com a conexão protética (hexágono externo ou cone-Morse) e a altura do osso (nível ósseo ou 5 mm de perda óssea). Ambos os sistemas de implantes receberam coroas metálicas aparafusadas em cromo-cobalto. O tecido peri-implantar foi simulado como um material isotrópico (resina de poliuretano). O bloco de poliuretano foi fixado e uma carga de 300 N foi aplicada na superfície oclusal em duas direções diferentes (Axial ou Não-axial) para cada modelo de implante e condição óssea. Os resultados foram analisados em termos de tensão de von-Mises e microdeformação óssea. Os materiais foram considerados isotrópicos, homogêneos, lineares e elásticos. Os resultados mostraram que não há diferença quanto à conexão protética para as tensões e deformações geradas sob a mesma incidência de carga. No entanto, a perda óssea e as cargas não axiais aumentaram a magnitude da tensão e da deformação, independentemente das conexões protéticas. Concluindo, a incidência de carga é mais propensa a modificar a tensão do implante e a microdeformação óssea do que a conexão protética. Além disso, quanto maior a perda óssea, maior a magnitude da tensão e da deformação geradas, independentemente da condição de carregamento.

Palavras-chave: Análise por elementos finitos. Implantes dentários. Peri-implantite. Tensão.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio *in silico* fue evaluar la influencia de las cargas axiales y no axiales en implantes implantados unitarios, con conexión hexagonal externa o cono-Morse en dos niveles óseos diferentes, mediante análisis de elementos finitos. Se analizaron dos modelos de implantes con la misma longitud (13 x 3,75 mm) según la conexión protésica (hexágono externo o cono Morse) y la altura del hueso (nivel óseo o 5 mm de pérdida ósea). Ambos sistemas de implantes recibieron coronas metálicas atornilladas en cromo-cobalto. El tejido periimplantario se simuló como un material isotrópico (resina de poliuretano). Se fijó el bloque de poliuretano y se aplicó una carga de 300 N en la superficie oclusal en dos direcciones diferentes (Axial o No-axial) para cada modelo de implante y condición ósea. Los resultados se analizaron en términos de estrés de von-Mises y microesfuerzo óseo. Los materiales se consideraron isotrópicos, homogéneos, lineales y elásticos. Los resultados mostraron que no hay diferencia con respecto a la conexión protésica para la tensión y la deformación generadas bajo la misma incidencia de carga. Sin embargo, la pérdida ósea y las cargas no axiales aumentaron la magnitud de la tensión y la deformación independientemente de las conexiones protésicas. En conclusión, la incidencia de carga es más propensa a modificar la tensión del implante y la microdeformación ósea que la conexión protésica. Además, cuanto mayor sea la pérdida ósea, mayor será la tensión y la magnitud de la deformación generada, independientemente de la condición de carga.

Palabras clave: Análisis de elementos finitos. Implantes dentales. Periimplantitis. Tensión.

INTRODUCTION

During the treatment of partially edentulous patients, especially in the posterior regions, some limitations can be found, such as reduce bone quality, bone volume as well as the presence of the maxillary sinus or mandibular nerve (Albrektsson et al., 1986; Ota-Tsuzuki et al., 2011; de Carvalho Moreira et al., 2019). In addition, occlusal loads applied to the implant-prosthesis-bone complex can be affected by several factors, such as the number and position of implants,

occlusal contacts, and load direction (Nishioka et al., 2009a; Nishioka et al., 2011; Satnos et al., 2012; Tribst et al., 2018a). These factors should be considered part of the treatment plan and sometimes are part of the professional’s control (de Vasconcellos et al., 2013).

Regardless the clinical success of implant-supported restorations, it should be proposed a safe and effective treatment to reduce the potential risk for occlusal overload during the chewing function. Depending on the occlusal contact, 2 types of loads can be generated: axial and non-axial with a bending moment (Vasconcellos et al., 2011; de Vasconcellos et al., 2013). The axial load is more present and favorable to the implant and bone, whereas the non-axial load promotes high stress and strain in the implant as well as in the bone (Tribst et al., 2018b).

According to bone response, the levels of stress and strain induced in the bone may determine resorption or not of the peri-implant bone tissue (Frost 1994; Souza et al., 2013; Nishioka et al., 2016; Datte et al., 2018; Datte et al., 2020). However, sometimes biological factors e.g., response to peri-implantitis can generate bone loss around the osseointegrated implants (Tercanli Alkis & Turker, 2019). In this sense, the effect of axial and non-axial loads in implant supported restorations with bone loss has not been investigated yet in literature.

Another factor that can be controlled by the dentist during the treatment plan is the selection of the most appropriate implant system (de Vasconcellos et al., 2015; Tribst et al., 2017a; Tribst et al., 2019a). There are several types of implants system available that can be used for the same clinical situation (Nishioka et al., 2009b; Nishioka et al., 2011; Nishioka et al., 2016). However, the use of morse-taper or external hexagon prosthetic connections are usually the most common options. The literature is controversial in terms of mechanical differences of both connections to the bone tissue microstrain (Nishioka et al., 2011; Tribst et al., 2019a), and therefore its association with different bone height and loadings can contribute to the scientific literature and assist the dentist in select the most promising system.

The objective of this current *in silico* study was to evaluate the influence of axial and non-axial loads on unitary implant-supported implants, with external hexagon or Morse-taper connection in bone level or with bone loss of 5 mm, using finite element analysis.

METHODOLOGY

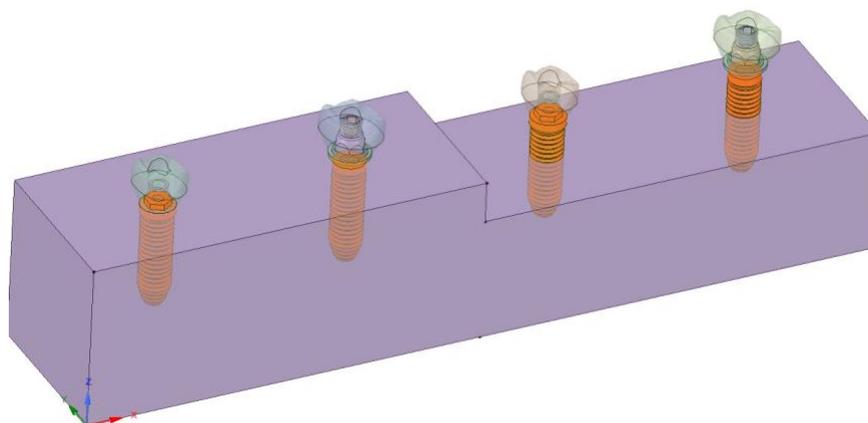
Using a previous reported numerical model (Datte et al., 2021), two different implant models were simulated in the present study: a regular morse taper and an external hexagon (Titaoss® TM cortical Intraoss®, SP, Brazil); both created according to the manufacturer’s dimensions (3.75 x 13 mm) using CAD (Computer Aided Design) software (Version 4.0 SR8, McNeel North America, Seattle, WA, USA). Next, the morse taper model received an anatomic prosthetic solid abutment (0.8 mm) and the external hexagon received an UCLA abutment (4.1 mm). Both abutments indicated for screw-retained fixed prosthesis. The implant was inserted at the center of a three-dimensional bone model (40 x 40 x 20 mm) with 3 mm of exposed threads. An anatomic first upper molar was modeled, duplicated and positioned on each abutment (Figure 1).

To simulate an isotropic substrate, a polyurethane resin block was used to receive the implants. In addition, 5 mm of bone loss has been simulated in half of the models totaling 4 clinical situations (2 implant systems x 2 bone height levels). The mechanical properties of polyurethane and the simulated materials were summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Models’ distribution according to the different parameters.

Material	Elastic modulus	Poisson Ratio	Reference
Titanium	110	0.30	Schwitalla et al., 2015
Polyurethane	3.6	0.30	Firmino et al., 2020
Co-Cr	220	0.30	Kayabaşı et al., 2006

Figure 1. Three-dimensional model used in the present study.



The materials were assumed as isotropic, linear, elastic and homogeneous. After the modelling process, the solid volumetric three-dimensional models were exported to the analysis software (ANSYS 17.0, ANSYS Inc., Houston, TX, USA) in STEP format. The contacts were considered bonded between all bodies. The models distribution are summarized in table 2.

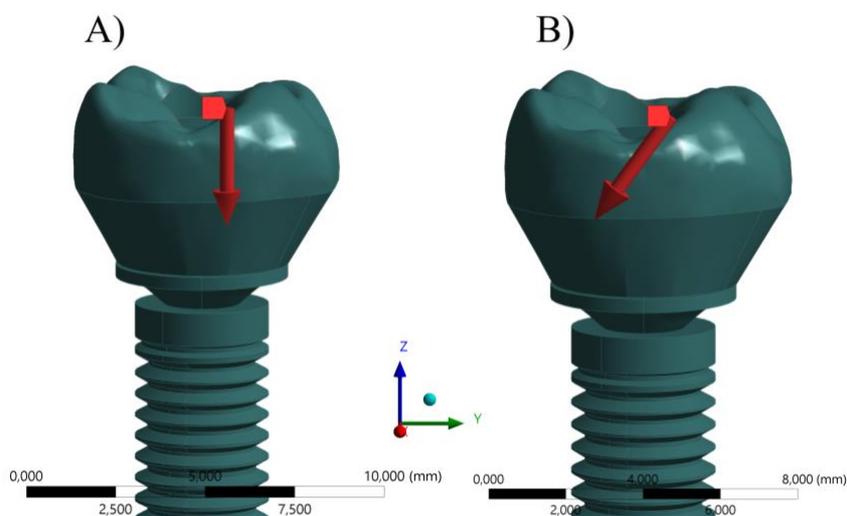
Table 2. Models' distribution according to the different parameters.

Model name	Implant system	Loading	Position
EH.0NA	External Hexagon implant	Non-axial	Bone level
EH.5NA			Bone loss
EH.0A		Axial	Bone level
EH.5A			Bone loss
MT.0NA	Morse-taper implant	Non-axial	Bone level
MT.5NA			Bone loss
MT.0A		Axial	Bone level
MT.5A			Bone loss

The fixation was defined on the bottom surface of the polyurethane block and the load was defined in two different moments (Axial and Non-axial) applied in the center of the crown (Figure 2).

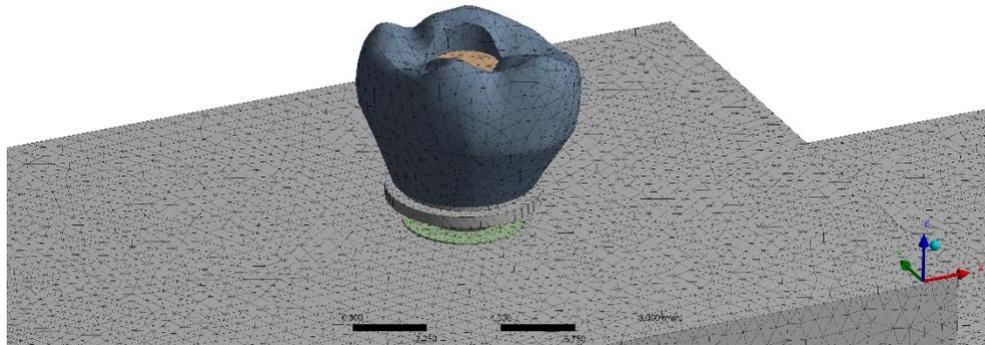
Figure 2. Loading conditions simulated in the present study.

A) Axial load and B) Non-axial load in 45°.



Tetrahedral elements (Figure 3) formed the mesh (754.936 nodes with 440.893 elements) and the results were obtained in von-misses stress for metallic solids and microstrain for peri-implant tissue.

Figure 3. Mesh performed for the finite element analysis.

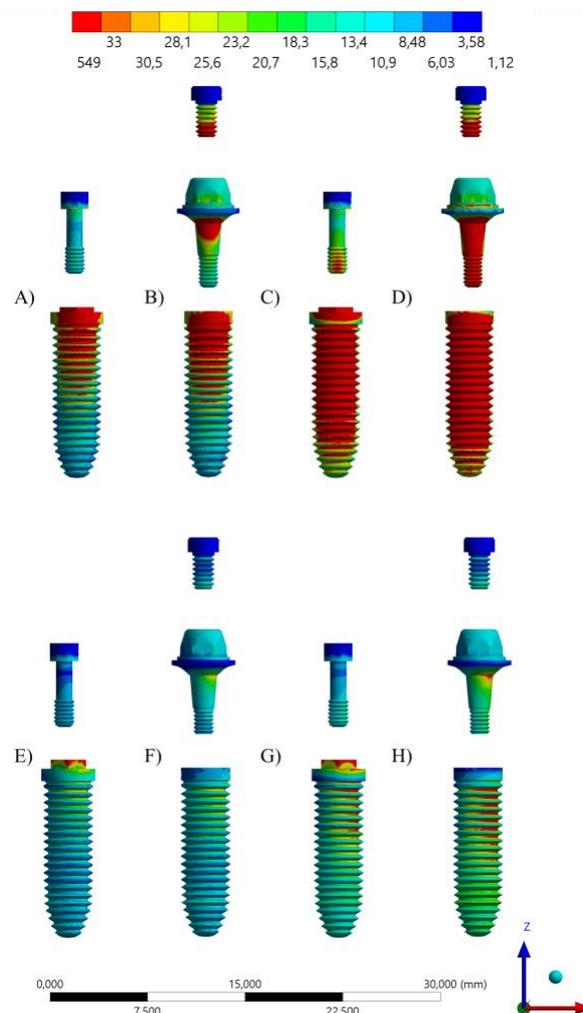


RESULTS

For the Von-Mises stress in each model, a qualitative comparison showed a stress increase in the models with bone loss when compared to bone level ones (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Von-Mises stress maps for each model.

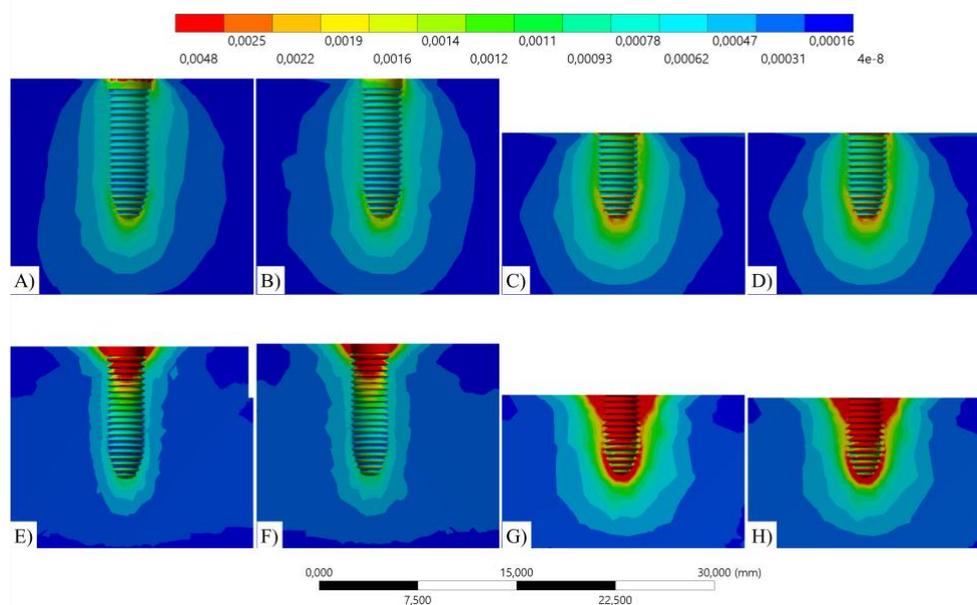
A) EH.0NA, B) MT.0NA, C) EH.5NA, D) MT.5NA, E) EH.0A, F) MT.0A, G) EH.5A, H) MT.5A.



According to the implant connection, it is not possible to note visible differences in the stress concentration in the titanium implant. The difference between both implant systems is visible in the prosthetic screw region, with highest stress magnitude in the external hexagon screw neck. No difference was reported between models (10%) with similar bone height for the microstrain (Figures 5 and 6).

Figure 5. Sagittal view of the microstrain maps for each model.

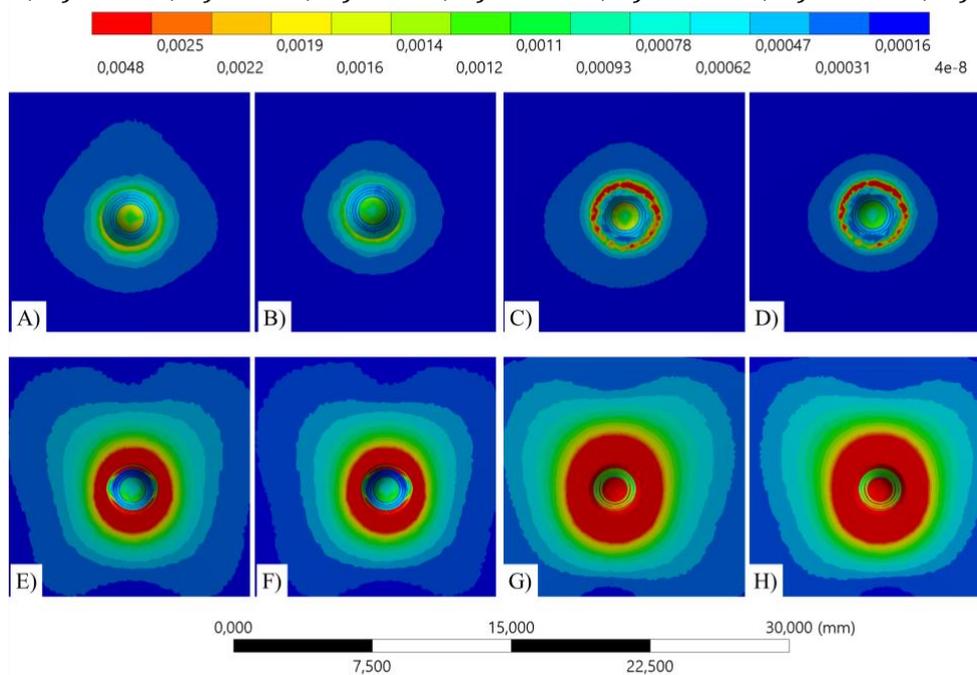
A) EH.0A, B) MT.0A, C) EH.5A, D) MT.5A, E) EH.0NA, F) MT.0NA, G) EH.5NA, H) MT.5NA.



For the apical and cervical regions of the set, the factor “bone loss” was significant; showing that for the mechanical response, the peri-implant tissue maintenance was more important than the implant connection itself.

Figure 6. Sagittal view of the microstrain maps for each model.

A) EH.0A, B) MT.0A, C) EH.5A, D) MT.5A, E) EH.0NA, F) MT.0NA, G) EH.5NA, H) MT.5NA.



DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to evaluate, *in silico* the stress distribution and strain of unitary implant-supported restorations with two prosthetic connections, bone heights and loading condition. The results showed that there was no difference between the external hexagon and Morse taper system, regardless the bone level. However, there was higher strain in the cervical and apical regions in the models with bone loss and non-axial loadings condition.

In addition to bone strain, it was observed in the numerical results that, regardless the implant system, a lower stress in the implant and in the screw when there is no bone loss, which corroborates with previous studies that have evaluated bone loss in dental implants (Linetskiy et al., 2017; Tribst et al., 2017b; Lemos et al., 2021).

In this study, polyurethane was used as an implant fixation substrate because it is widely used as a bone tissue simulator material in laboratory studies (Nishioka et al., 2010; Miyashiro et al., 2011; Rodrigues et al., 2017; Rodrigues et al., 2018). Bone structures have predictable behavior in front of a stimulus, as it has been defined that a normal mechanical stimulus results in preservation of bone tissue (Frost, 1994). Values considered low can lead to reabsorption due to disuse, and exacerbated values can lead to remodeling disorganization, which causes irreversible damage on the bone structure (Mendes Tribst et al., 2020). Bone quality is an important factor in the effectiveness of treatment with dental implants (Nishioka & Souza, 2009). Despite the surrounding peri-implant tissue does not constitute a homogeneous substrate, *in vitro* studies have been simulated its behavior with homogeneous and isotropic materials (Nishioka et al., 2009a, Nishioka et al., 2016; Tribst et al., 2018). In this sense, the present study followed the same approach using a previous validated material to standardize the model's mechanical behavior. However different bone quality and types can modify the mechanical response reported herein and the clinical extrapolation should be carefully performed (Lemos et al., 2021).

A previous investigation reported that the occlusal load of patients with implant-supported restorations are nearby 293.2 ± 98.3 N for posterior regions (Mericske-Stern et al., 1995). In this study, a load of 30 kgf was used, equivalent to approximately 294 N, applied through the Load Application Device (Nishioka et al., 2015), following previous studies with similar methods (Nishioka et al., 2016; Rodrigues et al., 2018; Tribst et al., 2018b; Tribst et al., 2018c; Tribst et al., 2019b).

The annual amount of bone loss less than 0.2 mm following the first year of implant service is recommended as one of the criteria for implant success (Albrektsson et al., 1986). Therefore, the present study simulated an aggressive condition with 5 mm of bone loss. According to the literature, the reduction in the bone height would jeopardize implant longevity (Linetskiy et al., 2017). The present study corroborates with that showing a similar mechanical behavior regardless the implant system. In addition, the results complement is suggesting that, if non-axial loads are present the bone loss will be a more problematic factor to the implant treatment.

A previous study reported that implants with excessive bone loss (3.0-mm or 4.5-mm bone loss), the stress and strain can be 2 to 3 times higher than that in implants without bone loss (Lemos et al., 2021). The present study corroborates with this statement showing that the values ranged between and regardless the prosthetic connection. It was also reported that progressive marginal bone loss directly affects the biomechanical characteristics of the implant wall and fixation screw, mainly in external connection implants under oblique loading (Lemos et al., 2021). The present study corroborates with that in terms of bone loss, however both external hexagon and morse-taper implant system are more prone to failure with the bone loss.

A previous study using finite element method reported that the peri-implant bone resorption may be higher in the buccal and palatal regions (Tercanli Alkis & Turker, 2019). It can be expected by the lowed volume of bone tissue in comparison with mesial and distal

regions. The present study showed a very similar strain trend in the bone tissue with axial load condition, however when the non-axial load was applied the buccal region showed higher strain magnitude.

According to previous numerical simulation, the critical values of microstrain were found when the inserted portion was smaller than the exposed portion (Tribst et al., 2017b). In this study the implants have 13 mm of height and 5 mm of bone loss in the worst situation, allowing more than 50% of the implant remains osseointegrated, and therefore requesting a follow-up by the dentist. However, when bone loss is present, the contact points and cusp angles should be modified and adjusted in order to keep the chewing load the most axial possible to avoid the deleterious effect of non-axial loadings condition.

It is important to note that the finite element analysis is an ideal condition that uses perfectly bonded contacts that cannot be clinically reproduced (Wandscher et al., 2015; Tribst et al., 2017a; Lopes et al., 2019). In addition, the processing method using castable or machined abutments can modify the vertical misfit and therefore the prosthesis longevity (Rodrigues et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

Despite the limitations of this study, the results demonstrated that the load incidence is more prone to modify the implant stress and bone microstrain than the prosthetic connection. In addition, the higher the bone loss the higher the stress and strain magnitude generated, regardless the loading condition.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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