

UPOTREBA STEREOLITOGRAFSKIH PODATAKA ZA GENERISANJE TRODIMENZIONALNIH MODELA U METODI KONAČNIH ELEMENATA

THE USE OF STEREOLITHOGRAPHIC DATA FOR THREE DIMENSIONAL FINITE ELEMENT ANALYSIS MODEL GENERATION

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Apstrakt

Uvod. Kompiuterske simulacije, kakva je metoda konačnih elemenata (MKE), mogu dopuniti ili čak zameniti skupocene i dugovremene procedure, neophodne kod uobičajenih in-vitro testova. Najvažniji, i najdelikatniji deo postupka svakako je generacija virtuelnih modela.

Materijal i metod. U ovoj studiji korišćen je trodimenzionalni skener (Steinbichler Optotechnik), pomoću kojeg je dobijen sken u obliku stereolitografskog zapisa, upotrebom odgovarajućeg softvera (InnovMetric Polyworks IMAAlign, kao i Alias Wavefront's Spider). Konverzija dobijenog .stl fajla, u zapreminski model pogodan za analizu metodom konačnih elemenata dobijen je pomoću programa Catia.

Rezultati. Za opisivanje modela je korišćeno ukupno 155355 čvorova i 104491 elemenata. Izgled elementa je u obliku tetraedra drugog reda. Dobijeni model može se dalje preraditi, u smislu dobijanja različitih varijanti, pogodnih za dalje ispitivanje.

Zaključak. Upotrebom navedene metodologije, moguće je dobiti precizan model oblika nepravilne površine, kakva je kontura zuba. Ovim se znatno smanjuje vreme i trud uloženi u generaciju modela kompleksnih oblika, čime se otvara put jednostavnoj i efikasnoj analizi matematičkom metodom konačnih elemenata.

Ključne reči: metoda konačnih elemenata, stereolitografija

Uvod

Nauka i naučno mišljenje svakako se baziraju na objektivnim činjenicama, dobijenih putem simuliranja objektivnih pojava u precizno kontrolisanim, eksperimentalnim uslovima. Premda su in-vitro eksperimenti najbolji način

Abstract

Introduction. Computerized simulations, such as Finite Element Analysis (FEA), can usefully supplement or even replace expensive and time consuming procedures that are associated with 'in-vitro' studies. Virtual model generation can be advantageously applied to the most important and most intricate areas of inquiry.

Materials and methods. In this study a three-dimensional scanner (Steinbichler Optotechnik) was used. Scan data was utilized to develop a stereolithographic data file using appropriate software (InnovMetric Polyworkd IMAAlign, and Alias Wavefront's 'Spider'). Conversion of the .stl file into a volume model suitable for FEA analysis was generated using Catia software.

Results. For the model description, 155355 nodes and 104491 elements have been used. Elements were tetrahedral, second class. The generated model can be further manipulated, meaning different variants suitable for further analysis can be achieved.

Conclusions. Using such a methodology, a precise model of irregular form, for example a tooth form, can be achieved. Although there is a cost in terms of time and money, once the model is achieved a gate towards simple and efficient FEA analysis is opened.

Key words: finite element analysis, stereolithography

Introduction

Scientific conclusions are usually based on objective data, gained by controlling variables in experimental conditions. It is often presumed that real experimental tests yield the most accurate results. However, there are often many

za proučavanje određene pojave, za njihovo izvođenje postoje mnoge objektivne prepreke. Pa tako, ekstenzivnost eksperimenta, broj uzoraka, uloženo vreme i, naravno, materijalni troškovi često mogu željeni dizajn studije učiniti teško dostupnim, pa i nemogućim za praktično izvođenje.

U pokušaju da se prevaziđu dotični problemi, kompjuterska predviđanja, koja simuliraju realne uslove postala su deo naučne, pa i stomatološke nauke tokom poslednje četiri decenije. Kombinacija različitih materijala, kao i kompleksna morfologija čine zub veoma nepogodnim za, na primer, analizu distribucije napona. Simulacija na kompjuterizovanom modelu može studiji dati mogućnost jednostavne provere interakcije većeg broja varijabli. Stoga, metoda konačnih elemenata (FEA – *finite element analysis*, FEM – *finite element method*, MKE – *metoda konačnih elemata*) postala je jedna od vodećih tehnika za analizu fizičkih fenomena na polju strukturalne, kao i mehanike čvrstih i tečnih tela.

Metoda konačnih elemenata je matematička metoda koja pretpostavlja pretvaranje realnog u virtuelni model definisanog, konačnog broja konstituenata – elemenata, u kojem se varijable od interesa aproksimiraju određenim matematičkim funkcijama. To je, zapravo, matematički model koji realni objekt transformiše u virtuelni obrazac koji se može prikazati kao skup brojevih, veoma malih polja, u kojem se individualna deformacija (tj. naponi) mogu jednostavnije izračunati u odnosu na ukupnu, veliku strukturu. Na osnovu analize deformacije ukupnog broja malih delova, može se pretpostaviti ponašanje njihove zbirne strukture.

MKE nalazi brojna područja svoje primene u različitim granama industrije. U biomehanici, MKE takođe pokazuje brojne prednosti kako kao istraživačko, tako i sredstvo za učenje. Metoda je veoma korisna jer može izneti zaključke nedostupne većini drugih tehnologija, mada su se, vremenom, pokazala i neka ograničenja njene primene. Radovi u polju stomatologije počinju člancima Brekelmans i sar. (1972),¹ da bi se danas mogli naći u maltene svim njenim granama: stomatološki materijali, oralna i maksilofacijalna hirurgija, ortopedija vilica, endodoncija i konzervativa, implantologija i, naravno, protetika.²⁻⁷

obstacles for the implementation of physical experiments. For example, complexity, duration and the number of variables involved, as well as time and cost, are factors which can prohibit progress. Furthermore, some conceivable experiments are impossible to implement practically.

In order to overcome the above mentioned problems, computerized simulations which replicate actual conditions have become a part of science over the previous four decades and dentistry has been included in this development. The combination of different materials, as well as complex morphology makes a tooth very hard to subject to a stress and strain analysis, for example. Simulations on a computerized model can also include the possibility of checking the interaction of different variables. Therefore, finite element analysis (FEA) has become one of the leading techniques for the analysis of physical phenomenon in the field of structural, solid body and fluid mechanics.

FEA is a mathematical method which transforms a real object into a virtual model. The method consists of defining the object in a finite number of constituents. Model variables are approximated with defined mathematical functions. Each small constituent, called an 'element', is assigned with a specific mathematical function, enabling individual deformation to be more precisely calculated than if the structure was taken as a whole. The function assigns physical properties to each specific element but the union of the parts allows the behavior of the entire virtual model to be studied.

FEA finds its application in different industrial fields. In biomechanics, FEA also has advantages both as an investigative and a teaching tool. The method is very useful since it can offer analyses which would be impossible by other methods. However, several limitations of FEA application have surfaced over time. Its introduction in dentistry was in 1972, with articles by Brekelmans, et al., and today it can be found more or less in all branches: dental materials, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, endodontics and conservative dentistry, implantology and, of course, prosthodontics.²⁻⁷

Today, the use of FEA, especially in combination with real experiments, sets a standard for many investigations that are considered contemporary. Use of FEA models enables a reduc-

Danas, upotreba MKE metode, naročito u kombinaciji sa realnim eksperimentom, standard je mnogih istraživanja koja sebe smatraju savremenim.⁸ Ona omogućuju smanjenje troškova i vremena od idejne zamisli do realizacije željene ideje, kao i povećanje poverenja u odabrani dizajn virtualnim testovima pod velikim brojem različitih uslova.

Najvažniji deo MKE studije je, svakako, MKE model. Njegove karakteristike imaju ogroman uticaj na kvalitet i validnost dobijenih rezultata. Stoga je generacija MKE modela jedan od ključnih faktora virtualne analize. Najvažniji nosi epitet i ubedljivo najtežeg, jer je MKE model sve osim lakog za napraviti. Prosečan model zuba može sadržati više hiljada elemenata i čvorova,⁴⁻⁷ imajući u vidu da njihov veći broj povećava preciznost studije. Pozicioniranje ovako velikog broja koordinata može trajati mesecima i godinama ako se radi ručno, gde čak i jedna greška menja vrednost izlaznih podataka. Takođe ne treba zaboraviti da su originalne metode podrazumevale neophodnost egzaktnih morfoloških mera,⁹ koje su se mogle dobiti napornim i dugotrajnim radom na preciznim presecima zubnih tkiva. Nadalje, nalaženje pogrešno pozicioniranog, među obiljem sličnih elemenata može predstavljati veoma zahtevan zadatak, koji je bio uobičajeni deo procedure sve do otkrića novih, efikasnijih tehnika za procesuiranje i generaciju 3D MKE modela.

Kako je, u svakom slučaju, modeliranje najzahtevniji korak za istraživača, cilj ovog rada je da predstavi jednostavan, precizan i efikasan metod za generisanje 3D MKE modela. Tehnika podrazumeva skeniranje, obradu i transformaciju skeniranih podataka u 3D virtualni model.

Metod rada

a) skeniranje

Trodimenzionalno skeniranje je metod dobijanja podataka o nepoznatoj trodimenzionalnoj površini koji se može upotrebiti gde god postoji potreba za skladištenjem i/ili reproducibilnošću kompleksnih oblika (Renishaw¹⁰). Na tržištu postoje različite vrste skenera (npr. optički, laserski, pipalica) od kojih svaki ima svoje za i protiv argumente.¹¹⁻¹² U ovoj studiji korišćen je optički skener Comet 250 (Steinbichler Optotechnik GmbH, Neubeuern, Germany, sl. 1.).

tion in cost and time from an initial idea to its final realization. There is also increased trust in a developed model which was tested under many conditions in the virtual environment.

The most important aspect of any FEA study is the FEA model. Its characteristics have a great effect on the quality and validity of results. Therefore, FEA model generation is one of the crucial factors in virtual analysis. This most important factor can also be the most difficult, since the FEA model is anything but easy to construct. An average tooth model can have several thousand elements and nodes⁴⁻⁷, bearing in mind that the greater number of these, the greater the accuracy of the study. Positioning and defining a great number of elements can take months or even years if done manually, where even a single error influences output data. It should furthermore be remembered that in the case of a tooth, precise morphological measurements are required that can only be gathered by sectioning. In addition, finding an incorrect element amongst so many similar elements can be a very hard task. Such intensive work was normal procedure until new, more efficient techniques for creating 3D model generation were developed.

Obtaining the virtual model is the most demanding task for any researcher. The aim of this research is to present a simple, precise and efficient method to generate 3D FEA models. The technique involves scanning, processing and transforming the scanned data into a three-dimensional virtual model.

Materials and methods

a) Scanning

3D scanning is a method of gaining data relating to a 3D surface that can be used wherever there is a need for defining complex shapes (Renishaw¹⁰). Various scanner types can be found on the market (e.g. optical, laser, touch-probe) each having certain advantages and disadvantages¹¹⁻¹². A Comet 250 (Steinbichler Optotechnik GmbH, Neubeuern, Germany, fig. 1) optical scanner was used in this study.

For this research, morphological characteristics were gathered from an extensive literature search¹³. Based on this data, average tooth dimensions as well as shape were determined.



Slika 1. Optički skener Comet 250
Figure 1. Optical scanner Comet 250



Slika 2. Voštani model zuba
Figure 2. Wax tooth model



Slika 3. Model gornje vilice (gornji levi kvadrant)
Figure 3. Upper jaw model (upper left quadrant)



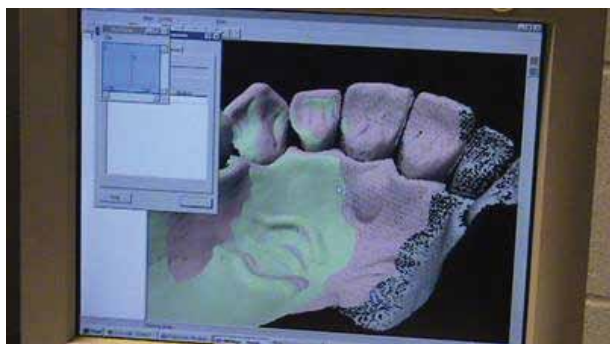
Slika 4. Projekcija svetla prilikom skeniranja
Figure 4. Light projection during scanning

Za ovu studiju, morfološke karakteristike zuba prikupljene su iz literature,¹³ na osnovu čega su dobijene prosečne dimenzije zuba te njegov oblik. Korenovi su takođe modelovani na osnovu mezo-distalnih i buko-mezijalnih opisa preuzetih iz literature, sl. 2. U ovom slučaju, izabran je gornji levi kvadrant, gde je pretpostavljen gubitak prvog molara, kao veoma čestog slučaja iz prakse (sl. 3.). Zubi su prvo izmodelovani u vosku, nakon čega je kreiran gnatološki model vilice.

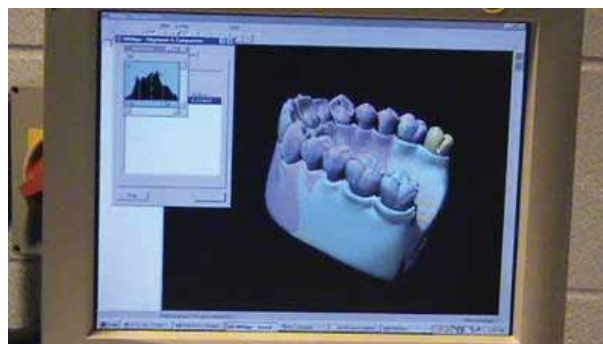
Generalno, 3D optički skener koristi normalno belo svetlo za dobijanje podataka o geometriji objekta koji se skenira, kao i struktura koje ga okružuju. Skener se sastoji od projektor, koji emituje prugasto svetlo na objekt, i kamere, koja registruje obrazac koji se potom javlja (vidi sl. 1.). Kada su linije emitovane, one su horizontalne i paralelne do kontakta sa površinom koja je pod uglom u odnosu na projekciju, kada trpe distorziju i savijanje ako se prate iz različitih uglova (sl. 4.). Uhvaćeni obrasci se automatski procesuiraju u računaru. S obzirom na pravolinijsko prostiranje svetlosti, u svakom pojedinačnom skanu mogu se naći tamne zone tj. regije senki (sl. 5.), koje zahtevaju višekratno, tj. multiplo skeniranje da bi se dobila besprekorna geometrija objek-

Tooth roots were modeled based on mesio-distal and bucco-mesial dimensions taken from the literature (fig. 2). For this case, the upper left quadrant was chosen and the most common occurrence assumed – the loss of the first molar (fig. 3). Teeth were first modeled in wax, after which a gnathological jaw model was created by the process described above.

In general, a 3D optical scanner uses regular white light for gathering data about the scanned model geometry, as well as surrounding structures. A scanner consists of a projector that emits striped white light on the object and a digital camera that registers the pattern (see fig. 1). When lines are emitted, they are horizontal and parallel until they contact a surface angled towards the projection path. Distortion and bending of the lines can be detected, if viewed from different angles (fig. 4). Captured patterns are automatically processed in the computer. If linear light transmissions are considered, it is clear that in a single scan dark zones can be found (shadow area, fig. 5). Hence multiple scans are required to achieve an undisturbed geometry. Correlation of single shots is possible based on several positions that form a so-called cloud of points which represent rough data of the scanned surface.



Slika 5. Pojedinačni skan sa vidnim 'zonama senki'
Figure 5. Single scan with visible 'shadow zones'

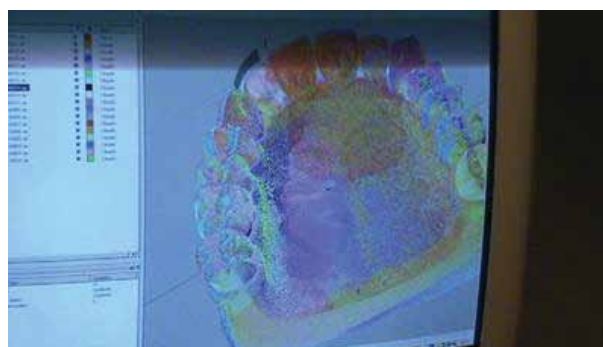


Slika 6. IMAAlign – povezivanje pojedinačnih skanova
Figure 6. IMAAlign – single scans joining

ta. Povezivanje pojedinačnih snimaka moguće je na osnovu odgovarajućih pozicionera, dobijajući tzv. oblak tačaka, koji predstavlja grub zapis geometrije skenirane strukture. Da bi se obezbedilo precizno pozicioniranje i asimilacija pojedinačnih snimaka, koristi se softver InnovMetric Polyworks IMAAlign (InnovMetric Software Inc. Quebec). Detaljan opis fuzionisanja pojedinačnih u završni oblak tačaka prevazilazi okvire ovog članka, a podrazumeva identifikaciju pozicionera, korišćenje posebnih alata (N-point pairs alignment tool npr.) i funkcija (Select Unique data), uz eliminaciju nepotrebnih podataka (sl. 6.). U završnom delu, oblak tačaka unosi se u Alias Wavefront's Spider software (Alias Wavefront Inc., Toronto, Ontario). Ovaj program se koristi radi povezivanja pojedinačnih delova u okviru oblaka tačaka u poligonalnu mrežu (sl. 7.). Naime, ako bi neko posmatrao realnu varijantu fiktivnog oblaka tačaka, obično oko nije u stanju adekvatnog prepoznavanja definisane strukture. Međutim, ako bi se preko njega postavilo parče tanke tkanine, iz pojedinih elemenata nastala bi jasno vidljiva, prepoznatljiva površinska struktura i geometrija. Ovaj proces u svojoj završnoj formi generiše tzv. .STL (Standard Triangulation Language) fajl, koji se univerzalno prepoznaje u odnosu na format oblika tačaka.¹⁴

b) Fomiranje MKE modela

Jednom dobijen, format oblika tačaka može se uneti u odgovarajuće programe koji prepoznaju .stl fajl ekstenziju, te iz nje kreiraju prvo površinski, a zatim zapreminski, tj. solid model. Cela procedura, u osnovi jednostavna, kod većine je softvera za modeliranje i analizu primenom metode konačnih elemenata automatizovana, tako da korisnik ima mogućnost



Slika 7. Generacija .STL izlazne forme
Figure 7. STL output form generation

A software package, InnovMetric Polyworks IMAAlign (InnovMetric Software Inc. Quebec), is used to position and assimilate single shots. A detailed description of this process is beyond the scope of the current article but in short, identification of the corresponding points, special tools (eg. N-point pairs alignment) and function (Select Unique data) are required (fig. 6.). Finally, the cloud of points is imported into Alias Wavefront's Spider software (Alias Wavefront Inc., Toronto, Ontario). This programme is used to join single parts from the point cloud into a polygonal network (fig. 7). Recognition of the scanned structure from a view of the point cloud alone is almost impossible. However, if in the virtual world a cloth, as it were, was thrown over the points, a clearly visible structure would appear. This process in its final form generates the so-called .stl (standard triangulation file), that can be easily recognized¹⁴.

b) FEA model generation

Once generated, the cloud of points format can be imported into specific programmes that recognize .stl file extensions, a surface created, and then a volume (solid) model achieved. The whole procedure is possible from modeling

izbora globalne finoće podele pomeranjem klizača na skali, čime se definiše ukupan broj elemenata i čvorova. Program, korišćen u ovom istraživanju, je softverski paket Catia (Dassault Systemes, France).

Za definisanje osobina materijala modela, neophodni su podaci o modulu elastičnosti, granici tečenja i Poasonovom koeficijentu. Elastično oslanjanje oslonih zuba je definisano primenom materijala sa malim modulom elastičnosti na sve konačne elemente koji se nalaze u zoni modela koja opisuje okosnicu zuba. Vrednosti koeficijenata date su u tabeli 1.

software and FEA analysis software which is automated. The user can however make fine adjustments by selecting an area which is defined by a number of elements and nodes. The software allowing this which was used in this investigation is Catia (Dassault Systemes, France).

To define the properties of the material, the modulus of elasticity and Poisson's ratio are needed. Elastic movements of the teeth were defined by the material with a low modulus of elasticity for all the elements in the boundary area. Values of the variables are listed in tab. 1.

Tabela 1. Vrednosti modula elastičnosti i Poasonovog koeficijenta za odabrane materijale

Tab. 1. Elasticity modulus and Poisson's ratio for the chosen materials

Materijal (material)	Modul elastičnosti (GPa) (modulus of elasticity (GPa))	Poasonov koeficijent (-) (Poisson's ratio)
Kost (bone)	14.7	0.3
Cirkonijum (zirconium)	205.0	0.22
Periodontalni ligament (periodontal ligament)	0.027	0.45
Cementni film (cement)	5	---

Rezultati

Konačni izgled modela posle dorade niza skeniranih površina je prikazan na slici 8. Trodimenzionalni model prepariranih zuba (25 i 27) i mosta sa zubnom nadogradnjom (26) dobijen je skeniranjem modela zuba i u obliku stereolitografskog zapisa, koji je preveden u zapreminski model u programskom paketu Ansys Inventor.

Na slici 9 prikazan je spoljni izgled mreže konačnih elemenata iz dve tačke pogleda. Mreža se vidi samo na površini modela, ali postoji u nizu slojeva i unutar modela.

Za opisivanje modela je korišćeno ukupno 155355 čvorova i 104491 elemenata u obliku tetraedra. Izgled elementa u obliku tetraedra drugog reda.

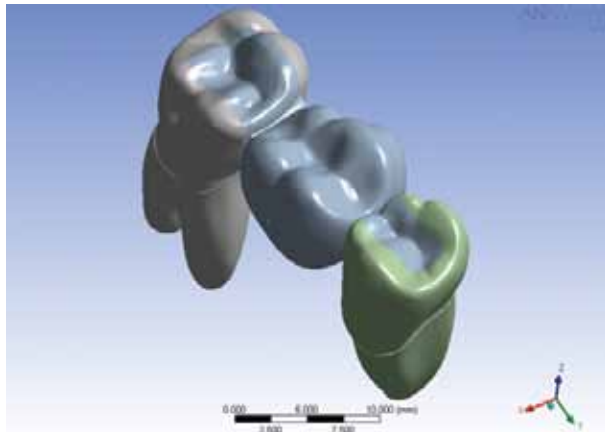
Kod predmeta koji nemaju pravilan geometrijski oblik, već imaju oblik tzv. slobodne forme, uglavnom je neophodna primena velikog broja elemenata i vrlo fine podele, da bi se obuhvatila svaka značajnija zakrivljenost

Results

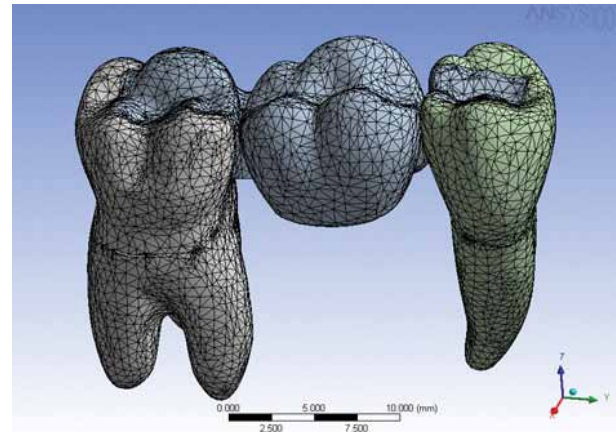
The final model after refining the scanned surfaces is shown in the fig. 8. In fig. 9, a finite element network has been shown from different viewpoints. The network is visible on the model surface but it also exists within the body of the model.

For model description 155355 nodes and 104491 tetrahedral elements have been used. The elements can be classified as second class elements.

Objects having an irregular shape, or a 'free form', usually need a huge number of elements and fine graduation in order to specify all curves of the object. Tooth form is representative of this group and therefore a very fine graduation and a huge number of elements and nodes are used for the description. For free form type objects, tetrahedral elements are the most appropriate description modality, since triangu-



Slika 8. Virtualni 3D model
Figure 8. Virtual 3D model



Slika 9. Model sa mrežom konačnih elemenata
Figure 9. Model with finite element mesh

u obliku predmeta. Oblik zuba je tipičan predstavnik ove grupe predmeta, zato se kod analize njegove nosivosti primenjuju izuzetno fine podele sa velikim brojem elemenata i čvorova. Za ovakav oblik površina (oblik slobodne forme) najpogodnija je primena elemenata u obliku tetraedra jer on sa površinama u obliku trougla može najvernije opisati promenu krivine spoljne površine zuba.

Pored boljeg opisa geometrije, finija podele omogućava i zadovoljenje ravnoteže sila između većeg broja pojedinih konačnih elemenata u tačkama koje se međusobno nalaze na manjem rastojanju. Sve ovo dovodi to tačnijeg rešenja numeričke simulacije ponašanja noseće strukture pod zadatim opterećenjem.

Na slici 10 je prikazano polje opterećenja, za slučaj delovanja kose sile pod uglom od 45° (simulacija uobičajenih mastikatornih pokreta).

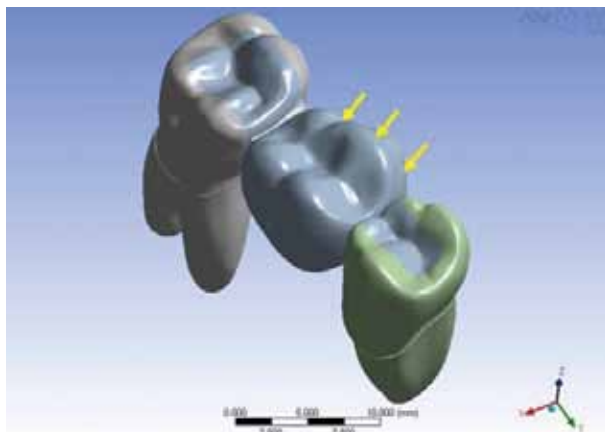
Primenom navedenih znanja i softverskih paketa, moguće je kreirati varijante virtualnih modela. Slika 10 pokazuje izgled virtualne

lar forms can precisely define curve variations of the outer surface.

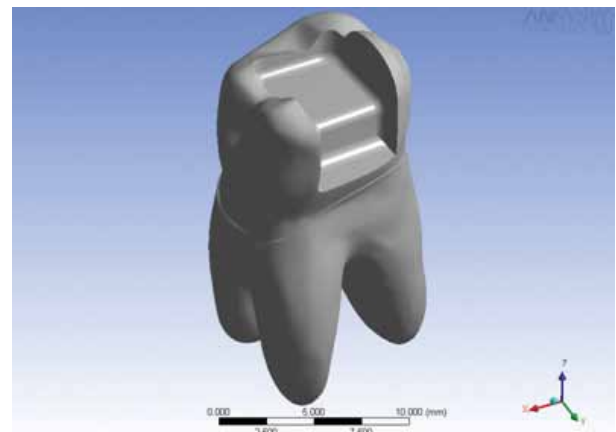
Besides providing a better description, a finer graduation enables force equilibrium between a greater number of single elements in points that are close to one another. This leads to a more accurate equation of the numerical simulation of model behavior under given conditions.

In fig. 10 force field application has been shown, in the case of the 45° force (simulation of the usual masticatory movements).

Using the mentioned skills and software packages, it is possible to create model variations. Fig. 10. shows virtual preparation in the form of a class II inlay. Therefore, surveillance of the influence of different variables is possible, decreasing time and investment compared with real tests.



Slika 10. Prikaz opterećenja pod uglom od 45°
Figure 10. 45° load



Slika 11. Virtualna preparacija II klase
Figure 11. Virtual II class tooth preparation

preparacije zuba nosača, u vidu kaviteta II klase. Na ovaj način, moguće je praćenje uticaja većeg broja varijabli na završni rezultat, skraćujući vreme i utrošena sredstva, koja bi bila neophodna kod realnih testova.

Diskusija

MKE modelacija predstavlja veoma interesantan, kvalitetan i progresivan način dobijanja podataka o različitim fizičkim karakteristikama materijala, pa tako i zubnih struktura, stomatoloških materijala i ostalih bioaktivnih struktura. Premda vrlo zastupljena u inostranoj literaturi, domaći članci tek odnedavno mogu se pohvaliti većim učešćem ove metode u istraživačkoj praksi. Međutim, iz sopstvenog iskustva, kao i mnogobrojnih kontakata sa drugim autorima, može se zaključiti da je ekstenzivnost pripreme 3D MKE modela zuba glavni limitirajući faktor primene ove metode. Svako ko se "pešačkim" putem bavio generacijom 3D MKE modela, tačku po tačku, čvor po čvor, karakteristiku po karakteristiku, zna koliko mukotrpan, naporan i neefikasan ovaj metod može da bude. Premda automatska generacija jednostavnih geometrijskih oblika, kakvi su npr. kocka, lopta, cilindar itd. ne mora biti komplikovana, njena jednostavnost definitivno ne važi kada su u pitanju kompleksni oblici, a zubna morfologija u tom nizu zauzima počasno mesto.¹⁵ Stoga je svaki način za brže, jednostavnije i preciznije dobijanje 3D MKE modela više nego vredan pažnje.

Generalno posmatrano, kod primene metode konačnih elemenata najčešće i najveće greške, koje su numeričke prirode, u analizi se mogu očekivati na takozvanim graničnim uslovima, tj. na mestima oslanjanja konstrukcije u mestima uvođenja lokalnih opterećenja. Stoga svi proizvođači programskih paketa za proračun konstrukcija primenom metode konačnih elemenata, a ostalih numeričkih metoda (konačne razlike, konačne zapremine), na samom početku svojih uputstava za korišćenje posebno naglašavaju činjenicu da su u numeričkim simulacijama greške moguće i da je neophodno zdravo rasuđivanje projekatnata konstrukcija u tumačenju rezultata.¹⁶ Proizvođači softvera na taj način se ograđuju od bilo kakvih materijalne ili krivične odgovornosti u slučaju havarije konstrukcije, koja je inače dovoljno dobro prošla proračun. Projektantsko iskustvo je nezamenljivo i jedino merodavno prilikom ocene kvaliteta konstrukcije. Numerički alati samo omogućavaju da se, uz dobro poznavan-

Discussion

FEA modeling is a very interesting and progressive way of gathering data about various physical characteristics of tissue, dental structures, dental materials and other bioactive structures. Though there is an obvious presence in foreign literature, domestic articles have only recently begun to implement this technique. From the author's own experience and many contacts with other authors, it can be concluded that 3D model generation is the main limiting factor preventing wider uptake of FEA at home. Anyone who has dealt with FEA element by element or nod by nod generation of 3D models, knows how hard and inefficient this method can be. Though automatic generation of simple geometric forms, such as cubes, balls, or cylinders is not difficult, such simplicity obviously cannot be applied to shapes such as tooth morphology, which must be one of the most irregular shapes¹⁵. Therefore every method offering faster, simpler and more precise 3D FEA model generation is worth exploring.

Generally, when applying the FEA method, the greatest and most common errors are in numerical analysis, in the so-called border zones; for example the transition regions and force application points. Therefore, all suppliers for finite element methods and other similar numerical programs (finite values, finite volumes), in the introductory part of the instructions for use put the attention on the necessity of brainstorming when reading data¹⁶. Manufacturers find this necessary with regards to legal prosecution in construction failure cases that have been previously verified by the method. Real experience is the best method of estimating construction quality. Numerical tools only enable faster data prediction but have imperfections and the possibility of software malfunctions.

The future of FEA application in dentistry, especially its wide use, depends mostly on its availability. Furthermore, the presence of the .STL files stimulates its use in the dental field. Rapid Prototyping, recently applicable in industrial branches only, slowly but surely finds its way towards the dental profession. So articles not only about scanning but also about denture fabrication can now be found^{14,17}.

je nedostataka softvera i numeričkih metoda, lakše i brže dođe do parametara neophodnih za ocenu.

Budućnost primene MKE metodologije u stomatologiji, pogotovo opsežnost njene primene definitivno zavise od primenjivosti i dostupnosti gore navedene ili njoj sličnih metoda. Štaviše, primenjivost i sve veća rasprostranjenost .STL fajlova obećava njihovu široku primenu kada su u pitanju stomatološke nauke. Rapid prototyping, do skora primenjivan u industrijske svrhe, polako ali sigurno počeo je da krči svoj put ka zuboj delatnosti, tako da se sada mogu naći radovi o primeni .STL fajlova ne samo u skeniranju već i u proizvodnji zubnih nadoknada.^{14,17} Značajne prednosti, kada se koriste .STL fajlovi vezani su za vrlo sofisticirane mogućnosti prikaza sadržaja (alati za vizuelizaciju, preseći itd.), i, dodatno, mogućnosti interakcije različitih skanova. Tako je moguće modele sjediniti ili preseći, stvarajući jedinstven model od delova, ili, pak, obrnuto, dobivši model zuba od skanova krunice i korena itd. Ovo, na primer, omogućava stvaranje tri morfološki identična ispuna od tri različite vrste materijala, s obzirom da se oni mogu dobiti 'isecanjem' iz originalnog modela zuba, olakšavajući međusobno poređenje. Rad sa .STL fajlovima takođe omogućava lake modifikacije, kao i unos i izlaz podataka vezanih za MKE mrežu. Očigleno da će stereolitografija biti više nego li važan segment stomatologije o kome će se tek pričati u dolazećim godinama.

Vraćajući se na temu MKE modelacije iz .STL fajlova, mogu se takođe očekivati nova pojednostavljenja i poboljšanja. Literaturni podaci pokazuju da optički skeneri imaju veoma dobre karakteristike, posebno vezano za kvalitet dobijenih podataka.^{11,12} Skener opisan u ovoj studiji deli te karakteristike, no je sigurno da mogu naći i njegovi naslednici, npr. Oni sa automatskim snimanjem multiplih snimaka iz različitih uglova (kakav je Comet 5), pomoću pokretnog stočića ili glave skenera, što bi naravno omogućilo još jednostavnije dobijanje podataka. Interesantno je na ovom mestu konstatovati da se na našem tržištu može naći relativno veliki broj skenera prilagođenih upravo dentalnim potrebama, a u vezi sa razvojem CAD/CAM tehnologije. Ovi skeneri variraju po osobinama i karakteristikama (Sirona In Eos, Procera, Wieland itd.) ali se gotovo redovno ne mogu koristiti za 3D modelovanje u tematski različitim softverima, kakav je CATIA. Ovo stoga, što su podaci koje ovi skeneri daju mahom kodirani, što, naravno, odgovara marketinškoj poziciji i zaštiti interesa komercijalnih firmi.

The main advantages, when using .STL files include the very sophisticated possibilities of visual presentation (visualization tools, cuts, etc.). Furthermore, single scan interaction is possible. Thus, some models can be joined or cut, creating parts out of the full model, or, vice versa. The root and crown structures can be taken away from the tooth, etc. For example, three morphologically identical fillings can be completed with three different materials, since they can be created by cutting an area from the original tooth which is then redefined as a filling material. Thus mutual comparison is greatly simplified. When working with .STL files, easy modifications to input and output data are also features connected with FEA modeling. It can be said with confidence that stereolithography is a topic set to enter dentistry in the coming years.

To return to the topic of FEA modeling using .STL files, further simplifications are also expected. Information in the literature shows that optical scanners give very good data quality^{11,12}. The scanner described in this study shares those qualities. However, its antecessors can still be found, e.g. those with automated scanning from different angles by a rotation scanner head (such as the Comet 5). This has further simplified the procedure. It is interesting to note that the dental market now offers a variety of scanners adapted specifically for use in dentistry, in CAD/CAM technology. There are scanners which vary according to the features and specifications required (Sirona In Eos, Procera, Wieland etc.), but commonly they cannot be used for 3D modeling in software such as CATIA. This is because scanned data are usually coded, enabling data protection which is necessary in the light of the commercial position of a firm in the market.

Further improvements demand the use of in-depth scanners, since the ones described above gain only surface object data. The latter are the most difficult to gain, bearing in mind the complicated tooth structure, but manual data input relating to the enamel, pulp and dentin thickness is obligatory. First attempts with CT and MRI data are promising, showing possible use in the scans of hard-to-reach areas, such as inner organs. It is to be noted, however, that the

Dalja poboljšanja zahevala bi mogućnost primene dubinskih skanova, s obzirom da se dosad navedenim tipovima skenera mogu dobiti podaci jedino o karakteristikama površine. Ovi poslednji jesu, doduše, najvažniji i najteži za dobijanje, imajući u vidu veoma komplikovanu zubnu morfologiju, ali zahtevaju manuelno dodavanje podataka o debljini gleđi, dentina i pulpnog tkiva. Prvi pokušaji rađeni u vidu CT i MRI snimaka su obećavajući,¹⁸ a njihova primena posebno je interesantna zbog mogućnosti direktne modelacije inače površinskom skeniranju teško dostupnih struktura, kakve su npr. unutrašnji organi. Treba, međutim, napomenuti da se princip rada ovih uređaja ne razlikuje od onog ovde prikazanog, osim nešto izmenjenog input-a, odnosno vrednosti ulaznih podataka. Nastavak puta do 3D MKE modela nadalje ide stopama opisanim u ovom članku.

Metoda konačnih elemenata, uz sve svoje prednosti i mane, koje danas dobro poznajemo, sadašnjost je i budućnost ispitivanja i naučnih delatnosti u mnogim granama stomatologije. Stoga je više nego bitno izučiti i primeniti nove, savremene i usavršene metode, kao što je primer opisan u ovoj studiji, pomoću koje se mogu postići efikasni, precizni i kvalitetni rezultati. Ovaj rad takođe je osnova za dalja istraživanja, jer MKE metoda može dati podatke koji se ne mogu postići drugim metodama. Ipak, za sada se čini da na našim prostorima ovakav pristup još uvek daje skromni doprinos naučno-istraživačkom radu. Zato je tehnološki napredak upravo faktor koji bi na ovom polju mogao doneti značajne izmene.

Zaključak

Primenom odgovarajuće metodologije, koji podrazumeva adekvatan skener, kao i programe za obradu skeniranih podataka, njihovo konvertovanje i ubacivanje u programski paket MKE, moguće je na jednostavan, precizan i kvalitetan način dobiti i najkomplikovanije modele za ispitivanje, kakve su, na primer, nepravilne konture zuba.

principle does not differ from the one described here, besides input data variation. The way to achieve 3D FEA models, even if internal data is gathered, follows the steps described in this article.

Finite element analysis, with its advantages and disadvantages that are very well known today, can be considered to have a presence and be expected to occur in the future of many dental research fields. It is, therefore, necessary to study and implement new, contemporary and improved methods, such as those described in this study, which enable precise and efficient results to be achieved. This article also forms the basis for further research, since FEA can gain data unobtainable by other methods. Still, it can be stated that this approach is not yet fully developed. Technological developments might just be one factor allowing significant improvements.

Conclusion

With the use of appropriate methodology, that uses an adequate scanner, as well as programs for scanned data calculation, their conversion and input into appropriate FEA software, generation of the most complex, high quality and precise FEA models, such as irregular tooth forms, is possible.

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