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Fellowship Examination Endodontics: Sample Case

Disclaimer

The following sample case is provided for illustrative purposes only. It is intended to demonstrate the style of case presentation and the type of reasoning expected in the Fellowship Examination. It should not be taken as a reflection of the specific content, scope, or level of difficulty of the actual examination.

Case Scenario

A middle-aged patient is referred by their general dentist for persistent discomfort associated with a mandibular molar. The dentist initiated endodontic treatment but was unable to complete the procedure due to complex root anatomy. The patient now reports mild lingering pain and sensitivity to biting.

Candidates may be provided with the following supplementary records for interpretation:

- *Radiographs*
- *Intraoral photographs*
- *Extraoral photographs*
- *CBCT*
- *Endodontic tables*

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Assessment, Diagnosis & Prognosis

Question: What additional information would you obtain to complete your assessment?

Proficient response demonstrates:

- Relevant medical/dental history and clear chief-complaint characterization (timelines, character, triggers).
- Selection and justification of appropriate clinical tests, interpreted in combination.
- Review of current imaging and rational indication for additional views/CBCT (not routine).
- Synthesis of subjective, objective, and imaging data into a focused differential that guides next steps.

Question: What is your pulpal and periapical diagnosis?

Proficient response demonstrates:

- Candidate should integrate clinical and radiographic findings to provide the proper diagnosis follow the AAE Diagnostic Terminology
- Internal consistency between stated diagnoses and the presented data.
- Brief justification with acknowledgement of uncertainty or need for further information where appropriate.

Question: What factors most strongly influence prognosis in this case?

Proficient response demonstrates:

- Consideration of biologic status and extent of periapical involvement.
- Assessment of structural/restorability factors and periodontal support.
- Recognition of anatomic complexity and prior/potential procedural complications.
- Incorporation of patient-specific factors (systemic, behavioral, access, maintenance).
- A reasoned overall outlook rather than a binary label.

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Treatment Planning & Decision Making

Question: What treatment options would you discuss with the patient?

Proficient response demonstrates:

- Evidence-based pathways from preservation to replacement with indications/limitations.
- Alignment of recommendations with diagnosis, anatomy, and restorability in patient context.
- Shared decision-making and identification of when referral is prudent.

Question: How would you communicate risks and benefits to the patient?

Proficient response demonstrates:

- Clear explanation of anticipated procedural / material risks, benefits, and uncertainties
- Realistic expectations about appointments, healing timelines, contingencies.
- Emphasis on definitive coronal restoration and maintenance to support success.
- Sound informed-consent process and verification of understanding.

Treatment Delivery & Management

Question: How would you approach the technical management of this case?

Proficient response demonstrates:

- Use a logical, stepwise clinical reasoning process to justify treatment.
- Plan access and canal negotiation based on anatomy.
- Apply evidence-based shaping and disinfection.
- Justify obturation technique and ensure a proper coronal seal.
- Clear instructions to the referring dentist as needed.

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Question: What follow-up and long-term considerations should be discussed?

Proficient response demonstrates:

- Appropriate review intervals with clinical and radiographic reassessment.
- Defined success criteria and triggers for re-intervention.
- Priority on timely definitive restoration, occlusion, and fracture-risk mitigation.
- Patient engagement in maintenance and a contingency plan if healing is delayed.

Communication

Candidates are assessed on communication holistically throughout the case.

Proficient response demonstrates:

- Communicates answers directly, clearly, and logically.
- Articulates reasoning clearly, concisely, and in a well-organized manner; remains relevant and uses appropriate terminology.