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Study: How environment may have affected ancient societies

🕒 June 1, 2015

PULLMAN, Wash. – A new study in PLOS ONE shows for the first time that epigenetic marks on DNA can be detected in a large number of ancient human remains. This could improve understanding about the effects of famine and disease in the ancient world.



Epigenetics is the study of factors, often environmental, that change gene activity without changes in the DNA sequence.

Previous studies had primarily detected a key epigenetic mark in isolated ancient remains. This study targeted DNA from archaeological populations, not just isolated samples, to gain insights into how past environments affected entire societies.

Cara Monroe, a Washington State University anthropologist and co-author, provided a portion of the DNA samples from skeletal remains with permission from the **Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Council** from the San Francisco Bay area, whom she has worked closely with for the past five years.

Read more in the Archaeology News Network at

<http://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.no/2015/05/ancient-dna-sheds-light-on-how-past.html#.VWzAME3bKfA>. Find the paper in PLOS ONE at <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0125344>.

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← S. Marc Lindsey

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