

The technology of mummification

Technology



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This paper describes the possible ethical dilemma of researching mummies and the clientele contributions that mummies are part of. Mummies have been used as medical research tools since the sass's. In Hungary they are helping researchers gain a better understanding of the human immune system to treat Tuberculosis.

A recent study has been done by Saint Lake's Mid America Heart Institute in Kansas City, which shows that mummies from many different geographical locations were effected by a modern day ailment, atherosclerosis, or hardened arteries. However, although the research is insightful and beneficial to medical progress, some people are concerned about the ethics of studying and disturbing the preserved deceased. Medical Concerns Medically, mummies contain a profound assortment of information because they are so well preserved.

Studying skeletons is limited to only bone, whereas mummies can provide specimens of ancient organs and parasites that may have caused their death. Many diseases present today whether infectious, environmental or congenital, are not fully understood yet. Obesity is an example of an evolutionary change. In the past when food was scarce, genes that stored energy whenever possible were favored, but now the inverse problem exists, we have an abundance of food which leads to health problems.

These types of medical issues can be best researched using ancient DNA samples. Buried between 1731 and 1838 in the crypt of a Dominican church in the northern Hungarian town of Vic, 265 naturally preserved mummies were discovered in 1994 during the church's renovation. Eighty- nine percent

of the mummies, ranging in age from newborns to over sixty-five, had at one point been infected with tuberculosis and around thirty-five percent were suffering from the disease at the time of death. DRP.

Ruth McKinney, senior lecturer in Pathogen Biology and Diagnostics at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said that the research on the Hungarian mummies could provide a historical reference for the development of the disease. " These samples were taken from before drugs were around, so they represent early TAB," said McKinney, who is not connected to the mummy research. " If we can pin down areas in the DNA of these mummies and see how they differ from modern DNA, it might help us understand why modern TAB drug resistance is developing. Atherosclerosis, the disease that causes heart attacks and strokes, is usually considered to be a disease of modern humans, related to contemporary risk factors such as smoking, obesity, and lack of exercise. However, DRP. Thompson and colleagues' research suggests that the high prevalence of atherosclerosis in early humans may signify the possibility of a predisposition to the disease. This is the first study that looked for the signs of arterial hardening in mummies that have lived in different worldly regions, with different cultures and lifestyles and in different times.

Ethics of Technology Ethical guidelines and public awareness exists for modern research samples, whereas for ancient mummy studies both are overlooked. This is particularly so that the investigations are invasive in order to get more precise scientific data. For example, crushing up bones to get DNA samples or irradiating the mummies for radiological analysis. All cultures have a certain set of rules and guidelines when it comes to dealing

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with human remains and the bodily integrity of these remains. Posthumous harm can be described as: willingly destroying, dismembering or using parts of a body of human remains.

Another aspect of damage can be described as damage to the personal identity. One can stipulate the continuity of a person even after death either through collective memory or through the preservation of their body and here the posthumous harm is done to that person's reputation, good name and family secrets. Lastly, the issue of ancient mummies in regard to their essential existence - a buried, entombed, human body, raises ethical questions. The right of the dead to remain in the state of burial is of central importance. Museums around the world have become increasingly sensitive about the display of human remains.