

Forensic dentistry in bioarchaeology

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ABSTRACT

As bones and teeth are usually the only surviving direct source of biological information from past human groups, which did not maintain written records, the study and analysis of the information derived from dental tissues in the archaeological material have a crucial role in paleodemography and paleopathology research and the subsequent understanding of past population lives.

The teeth of the skeletal remains are typically evaluated regarding the presence of dental pathology markers (decay, periodontal disease, dental calculus, tooth wear, antemortem tooth loss). The evaluation is performed by the use of macroscopic and microscopic methods but also biochemical analysis, allowing the reconstruction of the diet and the dietary variation between different population subgroups defined by age, sex or social status as well as possible changes throughout the examined period.

The scope of this work is to highlight the application of dental bioarchaeological techniques to the archaeological skeletal samples, which enable the development of demographic profiles for the examined historic settlements, covering aspects such as the population's composition, continuity and immigration, the social structure, the position of women and children, the dental health and diseases.