

Abstract

Human osteological and dental remains are important for reconstruction of health and disease patterns in the past, preserving information in the form of abnormal changes on bones and teeth. These changes can reflect the spread of numerous diseases and the consequences they had on the health of various historical populations and groups.

Systematic investigation performed within the present thesis explored pathologies in skeletal collections from six archaeological sites from across Slovakia and Hungary, dating to the 1st and 5th centuries AP. The total sample consisted of 300 individuals that were divided among three populations: the Germanic (GS), the Roman (RS) and the Sarmatian series (SS). Pathologies were assessed macroscopically and discussed on population and individual levels. Overall, sex, age and lesion distribution frequencies were used to determine a disease pattern characteristic for a corresponding group and then compared between the series.

Conditions identified during the analysis were arranged into nine main categories. The analysis revealed that the health status of GS, RS and SS was generally good, though adults from GS and RS had experienced poorer dental health. The most common lesions observed in all series, particularly in GS, were due to degenerative and dental diseases, while frequencies of other conditions have not exceeded a 20 % population rate. Frequencies of pathological alterations symptomatic of systemic impairment were low in all series, indicating that these populations were not greatly exposed to stressors disturbing their development during the early years of life. The skeletal evidence of trauma was found in all series and mainly included injuries which are expected from falls or accidents. Injuries associated with interpersonal violence were, in contrast, rare and observed only in GS and RS. The results also show low frequencies for infectious diseases, though their presence suggested that a risk of contracting nonspecific respiratory diseases or tuberculosis was increased in urban and urban-related contexts (RS) compared to other environments. Overall, the pathological data offered an additional insight into the living conditions and activities of the three Roman period populations.