

Abstract

Stable isotope analyses of human bone collagen are the valuable tool of the diet reconstruction in bioarchaeology. These analyses help to understand the lifestyle of our ancestors. Values of carbon and nitrogen stable isotope ratios show if an analysed specimen used more terrestrial or aquatic food sources, plants with C3 or C4 pathway of photosynthesis or whether his primary protein source were plants or animals. The stable isotopes also provide information about diet differences between different sexes, people with different socioeconomical status or different ages. We can study long-distance trade and residential mobility by results of isotope analyses. A combination of isotope ratios and archaeological knowledge provides valuable information not only about the diet but also about the lifestyle of historical populations. For example in several medieval European populations were discovered geographical differences and partly chronological differences which can be explained by the different diet in different localities and diet changes in Middle ages.