

Abstract

This thesis is divided into three parts. The first part aims to summarize the basics of etiology – issues of degenerative joint disease (DJD), firstly from the medical point of view and subsequently from the perspective of bioarchaeology. The next chapter offers a list of assessment options for degenerative joint disease in large axial joints and the spinal joints. It describes 10 methods used for assessment of DJD in axial joints, 13 methods for intervertebral joints and 4 methods for apophyseal joints.

In the last part, there are examples of degenerative joint disease cases observed in a population-based study of human skeletal remains uncovered in the domain of today's Czech Republic. The main aim was to create a summary of incidence of this disease from the Bronze Age to present. Considering the fact that all hitherto carried out studies in this field were merely realized in large population groups with good preservation of skeletal remains, only studies of skeletal remains dating back to the early Middle Ages were selected (Mikulčice-Valy, Kostelisko, Josefov). Therefore, only the incidence of DJD in the mediaeval population could have been described. In other prehistoric and historic eras the degenerative joint disease cases were not assessed in detail, by the epidemiological approach or they were assessed on small skeletal sets only, which is not predicative. In literature, only interesting cases of DJD or verbal descriptions of each separate skeleton can be found. Epidemiological studies almost do not exist.

Key words: arthritis, spondylosis, classification methods, degenerative joint disease occurrence, early mediaeval population