

DID PEOPLE SUFFER FROM SINUSITIS IN THE MEDIEVAL AGES?

Iwona Teul¹, Halina Ey -Chmielewska², Jacek Lorkowski^{3,4}, Wieslaw Lorkiewicz⁵, Dariusz Nowakowski⁶

¹Department of General and Clinical Anatomy and ²Department of Dental Prothetics, Pomeranian Medical University, Szczecin, Poland; ³Department of Orthopedic and Traumatology, Central Clinical Hospital of Ministry of Interior, Warsaw, Poland; ⁴Department of Disaster Medicine, Chair of Anesthesiology and Intensive Care, Jagiellonian University Medical College, Cracow, Poland; ⁵Chair of Anthropology, University of Lodz, Poland; ⁶Institute of Biology, Department of Anthropology, University of Environmental and Life Sciences, Wroclaw, Poland

Our breathing depends on clear sinuses, and the occurrence of sinusitis is particularly unpleasant. The paranasal sinusitis is a disease that afflicts a significant percentage of the population and causes considerable long-term morbidity. A large part of the contemporary urban and rural population suffers from mucositis of the nose and paranasal sinuses. It is estimated that this applies to about 12% of the population. Undoubtedly, environmental pollution and increasingly common allergization of the natural and chemical environmental factors increases the occurrence of sinusitis. This disease has a significant impact on the quality of life of patients. More ever it is a major economic problem. Let us take a closer look whether it occurred a few centuries ago. We examined two populations from the Medieval Ages for signs of chronic inflammatory disease of the maxillary sinus. The populations represented rural communities with a different social status. Maxillary sinuses of 95 individuals were inspected macroscopically and, if necessary, with an endoscope. Osseous changes, including the pitting and/or abnormal, spicula-type bone formation were present in 68 cases (64.78 %). It was found that dental infection was a major cause of maxillary sinusitis (11.6%). Severe bone changes were observed in the adults' skulls, but were also similar on the walls of the sinuses of children's skulls. The studies of postinflammatory changes manifested remodeling and damage of sinuses walls and suggested that both children and adults in the early Middle Ages suffered from chronic sinusitis. These observations confirmed that the climate, environment and lifestyle of the Medieval populations affected and contributed to the morbidity of diseases of the upper respiratory tract.