

Mammoth Suffered Osteoporosis, Other Human-like Bone Diseases



Not only humans suffer from the pathological bone disease but the mammoth fauna as well. A research team discovered that a staggering 42 percent of the mammoth have problems in their skeletal system. The discovery was supported by bone specimens that the team gathered from Berelyokh which is a hoard of specimens from Yakut variant of mammoths.

Derived from Yakutia region where the Yakut mammoths were found, these behemoths lived some 12,000 to 13,000 years ago. The bone specimens are well-preserved, thanks to sediments which hid them from predators and preserved them from deterioration. These specimens are also the foremost proof that mammoths suffered from bone diseases that are similar to modern humans.

According to Sergei Leschinskiy, the medical condition known as either "rice grain" or "articular mouse" is apparent among the Yakut mammoth bone samples. The same medical condition is common among humans, the Earth Magazine said. The rice grain can cause severe joint pain and can potentially lead to subchondral bone necrosis. This lingering ailment among mammoths is believed to have restricted their movements and may have led to them being an easy prey for other animals.

Comparable to common human bone diseases, the mammoth also suffered from osteoporosis, osteofibrosis, metabolic disorders, and articular diseases. The researchers also stressed that they are studying not just one mammoth but the bones came from several individuals, according to Phys.org. It means the bone diseases that targets the mammoths is not an isolated case.

Another common anomaly that the team divulged is the occurrence of open transverse apertures of the cervical vertebrae. This affects the blood vessels and nerve plexuses. Again, the same condition can be observed from humans.

The paleontologists said that the bone disease discovery in mammoth specimens revealed an interesting conclusion. The mammoths struggled to get ample minerals, starved and suffered geochemical stress. The group also theorized that this problem may be caused by a major ecological change in their surroundings

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