



Investigating skeletal frailty and resilience in ancient human populations



Abstract

Palaeopathological lesions imply an individual suffered from and survived life's stressors sufficiently long to alter their skeletal or dentoalveolar structures. However, this interpretation can sometimes undermine the reality that observable skeletal lesions reflect adaptive, albeit degenerative, processes supporting continued individual survival in stressful circumstances. Skeletal frailty index constructs (SFIs) illustrate not only nuanced portrayals of individual- and population-level frailty skeletal lesions/conditions, but demonstrate the association between skeletal frailty and resilience. In this talk, SFIs are applied to two human skeletal samples (Postmedieval London and Roman period Turkiye) to show how age-at-death and skeletal frailty, operationalized as a cumulative phenotype of skeletal and dentoalveolar markers, jointly reflect both individual lifetime decrepitude and resilience through longevity in distinctive historical and mortuary contexts.

Dr Kathryn Marklein is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Faculty Researcher at the Center for Archaeology and Cultural Heritage at the University of Louisville. She is a biological anthropologist with expertise in Roman bioarchaeology and skeletal frailty and resilience. She is also involved in research, teaching, and curation initiatives dedicated to ethical futures for human skeletal remains.

Details

1pm AEST, Friday 5 May 2023

Attend via Zoom:

<https://tinyurl.com/bdfavv62>

Attend in Person:

Room W3.03, Baldessin Precinct Building,
ANU Acton Campus

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