

Cuttings from the media

MEDIA LITE

Digging up type 2 diabetes variants in Neanderthal DNA

A team at Harvard Medical School, MA, USA, have compared the DNA from the toe bone of a 50 000-year-old Neanderthal woman to over 1000 present-day humans to see which genes are the same and which are different, with the inference that genes that show similarity could suggest *Homo sapiens* inherited them when they moved out of Africa and interbred with Neanderthals.

Their work, published in *Nature*, suggests gene types that influence diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and Crohn's disease, found in people today were incorporated when this interbreeding occurred.

This could provide an explanation for why present-day humans outside of Africa appear to be more susceptible to type 2 diabetes; because *Homo sapiens* that remained in Africa did not breed with Neanderthals and thus did not acquire these gene types that more strongly influence disease.

BBC News
29 Jan 2014



Action on Sugar: New campaign group to lower the amount of "hidden sugars"

Action on Sugar, a new campaign group, has been set up with the aim of reducing the amount of "hidden sugars" added to food and drinks, and raising awareness about it.

The new group, set up by the same team behind Consensus Action on Salt and Health, aims to raise awareness of "hidden sugars" by helping people to recognise when foods contain them, as they are not always obviously high sugar foods. They also plan to encourage manufacturers to reduce

how much is added to foodstuffs. Action on Sugar believes a 20% to 30% reduction in added sugar is achievable in 3 to 5 years from now.

The hope is that reducing the amount of added sugar to foods could slow the increasing prevalence of diabetes and obesity in the UK.

BBC News
9 January 2014

Number of people with diabetes rises to 3.2 million

The number of adults in the UK with diabetes reached 3.2 million in 2013, a rise of 163 000 from 2012: the largest rise over 1 year since 2008.

The rise from 2012 can be partly explained by the final figure now including all forms of diabetes, which did not occur before (i.e. type 1, type 2 and rarer forms of diabetes).

This report suggests that 6% of the UK population have diabetes; however, it does not account for the number of people with undiagnosed diabetes.

Diabetes UK
10 February 2014

Are Alzheimer's and type 2 diabetes the same condition?

Researchers from Albany University, NY, USA, have suggested that Alzheimer's disease could be the same as end-stage type 2 diabetes.

It is believed that the extra insulin that is produced in those with type 2 diabetes gets into the brain and disrupts its chemistry, eventually resulting in masses of amyloid proteins that accumulate into toxic clumps. Ewan McNay, one of the researchers of the study said, "It's the same amyloid build-up to blame in both diseases – [people with] type 2 diabetes really do have low-level Alzheimer's".

The Sunday Times
1 December 2013

Adults with diabetes are susceptible to seasonal influenza

Working-aged adults with diabetes have a 6% increased susceptibility of developing flu, with the potential for a longer stay in hospital than adults without diabetes. These are the findings of a Canadian study published in *Diabetologia*.

In total, 166 715 participants were included in the research: 56 513 people with diabetes were matched with 110 202 people without diabetes in a 2:1 ratio.

The authors of the article conclude: "It may be cost-saving to target working-age adults with diabetes for vaccination, [even] with a presumed rate of vaccine effectiveness as low as 20%".

ScienceDaily
24 January 2014