

NO EVIDENCE OF CANCER IN INDUS VALLEY SITES: STUDY

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

Evidence of cancer in early humans were found in a review of 154 paleopathological studies dating back to 1.8 million years in historic Egyptian and German sites.

However, the study, "History of Growing Burden of Cancer in India from Antiquity to 21st century", published recently in the *Journal of Global Oncology*, states that no comprehensive historical review could be gathered scanning through voluminous data on medical literature from prehistoric times.

Dr. Mohandas Mallath, the co-author of the study states that no paleo-oncology reports of cancer have been recorded at the Indus Valley civilization or Deccan Chalcolithic sites except for mention of some benign osteomas. Fewer samples and poor preservation were some of the limitations of these studies, he said.

The research led the authors to search in all kinds of published data from the PubMed to various scholar databases online and prominent archives of the British Library, Tata in Pune, publications by Government, WHO. International cancer research organisations and also data on demography, epidemiology, disease burden and so on.

The study says, there are references to cancer-like symptoms in many ancient texts including the 'Atharva Veda' and two ancient medical systems, Ayurveda and Siddha, which have been in use for more than 2,500 years. These texts mention the use of surgery and herbal medications for these diseases. The ancient medical classics of India have devoted little attention to cancer-like illnesses, suggesting a low prevalence of cancer in those times perhaps, said Dr. Mallath.

No original texts on cancer were found in any of the AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) texts browsed, he said. Autopsy, which was used to train in Ayurvedic surgery, declined during the Buddhist period starting around 400 BC because of the concept of *ahimsa* (non-violence). It probably halted discovery of deep-seated cancers later on, Dr Mallath suspects.

Tibetan medicine describes a cancer-like disease as Dre-Nay, the Greco-Arabic system, called Unani-Tibbs medicine had termed it Sartan, meaning crab in Persian.

Several Europeans works from the 16th century mention Indian plants, drugs and formularies used by the natives in cancer treatment. Besides the famous works like *Coloquios dos Simples e Drogas da India*, in 1563 and *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus 1678 to 1693*, there were medical writings in 17th and 18th centuries with references to cancers. Creation of the Indian Medical Service (IMS), helped in diagnosing cancers. Its early publication makes passing reference to cancer.

Reference of malignant cases were found in F.H. Brett's publication from Calcutta, *A Practical Essay on Some of the Principle Surgical Diseases of India*, and also in the 1856 work of C. Morehead from Grant Medical College in Bombay.

In 1866, W.J. Elmslie was the first to publish a series of 30 patients with epithelioma, including the unique cancer associated with the use of a *kangri* pot, among 5,080 patients from Srinagar

in Kashmir.

From 1880 to 1910, there were more than a dozen case series and audits published on cancer in India.

Patients diagnosed with cancer were predominantly male, because women rarely used Western medical facilities given cultural norms. The importance of older age in the development of cancer was recognized, and the difficulties in obtaining the real age of native Indians were stressed in the clinical manual for India in 1897.

You have reached your limit for free articles this month.

Register to The Hindu for free and get unlimited access for 30 days.

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Sign up for a 30-day free trial. [Sign Up](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper ,crossword, iPhone, iPad mobile applications and print. Our plans enhance your reading experience.

Why you should pay for quality journalism - [Click to know more](#)

Please enter a valid email address.

The soreness or injury from a workout can make you feel like you are hungover

Subscribe to The Hindu now and get unlimited access.

Already have an account? [Sign In](#)

Sign up for a 30-day free trial. [Sign Up](#)

To continue enjoying The Hindu, You can turn off your ad blocker or [Subscribe to The Hindu](#).

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](#)

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com