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Oldest evidence of leprosy found in India

PTI 27 May 2009, 08:35pm IST

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WASHINGTON: Archaeologists claim to have found the oldest evidence of leprosy in India.

A team from Appalachian State University and Deccan College Pune has based its findings on an analysis of a 4000-year-old skeleton from India bearing the evidence of leprosy, the 'PLoS One' journal reported.

And, according to the archaeologists, the skeleton represents both the earliest archaeological evidence for human [infection](#) with Mycobacterium leprae in the world and the first evidence for the disease in prehistoric India.

Their study demonstrates that leprosy was present in human populations in India by the end of the mature phase of the Indus Civilisation (2000 BC) and provides support for one

hypothesis about prehistoric transmission routes for disease.

According to them, the finding also supports the hypothesis that the Sanskrit Atharva Veda, composed before the first millennium BC, is the earliest written reference to the disease and that burial traditions in the second millennium BC in one northwestern Indian village bear some resemblance to practices in Hindu tradition today.

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