Tracking of parasitic infections in humans and animals in ancient Iran: Could these findings interpret the emerging and re-emerging diseases?

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Our understanding about the parasites, their life cycles and the patterns of their distribution among the humans and animals in the ancient times, can lighten the dark corners of the mind upon the diseases, cultures and social behaviors of human ancestors. Gathering information and reconstructing of the map of parasitic diseases in the distant past would be a fundamental approach to predict the future status of the infectious diseases in similar geographic conditions. Retrieving of some helminth eggs along with the clues of human infection from thousands of years ago with no existed modern records in the given region, could be a sign of growing in the health level as well as the global change effects on the same geographical region over the time. On the other hand, if our careful investigation on finding of certain parasites would not be possible in a given archeological site, while these agents are still prevalent in that region, the recent changes in the parasite life cycles and in the patterns of infection transmission should be regarded. Moreover, the past epidemiological status of the diseases could be estimated within the present paleopathobiological findings in the endemic areas. Reaching to elimination phase of certain parasitic infections like malaria, urinary schistosomiasis and dracunculiasis in the endemic countries including Iran can be discussed through a regular cross-sectional paleoparasitological studies. The variety of helminth eggs which had been found in different Iranian archaeological sites, encourage the researchers to extend their paleoparasitological programs in a wider territory to find more species of parasites in future.

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