Cancer can teach us about our own evolution

By asking ourselves why cancer might exist, we can get a glimpse of life in a bygone biological age.

Cancer, it seems, is embedded in the basic machinery of life, a type of default state that can be triggered by some kind of insult. That suggests it is not a modern aberration but has deep evolutionary roots, a suspicion confirmed by the fact that it is not confined to humans but is widespread among mammals, fish, reptiles and even plants. Scientists have identified genes implicated in cancer that are thought to be hundreds of millions of years old. Clearly, we will fully understand cancer only in the context of biological history.

View the original article here: Cancer can teach us about our own evolution