

## Recent stories got it wrong—Rats not exonerated from causing Black Plague

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

Scholars have debated the details of the Black Death for at least a century. The general consensus is that the source of the pandemic was plague, a nasty zoonotic disease caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, although some experts maintain other infectious agents may be to blame. Still, *Yersinia* DNA has been found in the teeth of Black Death victims at archaeological sites, which suggests that plague was at least partly responsible for the widespread deaths.

There are three forms of plague: bubonic, pneumonic, and septicemic. All are caused by *Yersinia*—the different names just mean the infection affects different parts of the body.

It is likely that all three forms of plague circulated during the Black Death, according to all of the experts I consulted. Even if one form was more common, there are no known genetic differences to prove it.

**Read the full, original story: [No, Rats Are Not Exonerated From The Black Death](#)**