

‘Buttressed against punches’: Did human face evolve to protect against fights?

Fossil records show that the australopiths, immediate predecessors of the human genus Homo, had strikingly robust facial structures.

For many years, this extra strength was seen as an adaptation to a tough diet including nuts, seeds and grasses. But more recent findings, examining the wear pattern and carbon isotopes in australopith teeth, have cast some doubt on this “feeding hypothesis”.

Instead of diet, Prof Carrier and his co-author, physician Dr Michael Morgan, propose that violent competition demanded the development of these facial fortifications: what they call the “protective buttressing hypothesis”.

The jaw, cheek, eye and nose structures that most commonly come to grief in modern fist fights were also the most protected by evolutionary changes seen in the australopiths.

Read the full, original story: [Male faces ‘buttressed against punches’ by evolution](#)