

Early human inter-species breeding results point to fourth mystery species

The evolutionary tree for modern humans a bit of a mess – humans haven't had a close relative on this planet for over 10,000 years, but there used to be several other closely related species living at the same time.

Genetic analyses on bone fragments from Neanderthals and Denisovans has given us new insight into our not-so-distant evolutionary past. The results indicate that not only did Denisovans and Neanderthals interbreed with modern *Homo sapiens*, but they also mated with an unidentified fourth hominin group. This information was presented to evolutionary geneticists last week for a meeting of the Royal Society.

There is evidence of certain populations of humans alive today getting as much as 4 percent of their DNA from Denisovans, though there is some debate surrounding it. Additionally, there are people with ancestries outside of Africa that could have gotten about 2 percent of their genomes from Neanderthals, though there is some speculation with this as well.

Right now, the identity of this fourth early human group remains a mystery. They could have come from Asia, but that has not yet been made certain. Future research will hopefully identify this unknown population and help us better understand all of the different evolutionary inputs that make us who we are.

Read the full, original story: [Interbreeding among early hominins](#)