

Paleovirology explores evolutionary history of HIV in hopes of finding cure

The Malayan flying lemur is a small brown animal with buggy eyes...[A] [group of Czech scientists discovered](#) another trait of this mammal: Deep within its genome is DNA of the oldest extinct virus related to HIV. They dated it to be around 60 million years old — meaning it was circulating when Europe and Greenland were still connected.

A lot of virus-fighting happens in the “now” — developing drugs, predicting where viruses will spread, and quarantining those infected.

But a relatively new field of research called paleovirology is taking a broader view: considering viruses on an evolutionary scale.

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At the heart of the research is the growing awareness that we’ve lived alongside viruses for millions of years — and that buried in the traces of those relationships could be insights into how we battle them in the future.

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“You’re digging into these genomes on your computer and suddenly finding these ancient relatives of viruses,” ...said [Aris Katzourakis, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Oxford]. “It’s like finding a miraculous fossil that a physical paleontologist could not hope to unearth.”

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Genetic fossil-hunters dig through HIV’s long history for clues to new treatments](#)