

Europeans left disastrous DNA mark on indigenous Americans

Of the many devastations Europeans wreaked upon the indigenous people of the “New World,” disease left perhaps the worst impact...But that’s not all: Researchers [report](#) Europeans’ arrival left a genetic mark—one that might help us to understand why diseases like small pox had such a disastrous effect.

John Lindo and a team of biologists, archaeologists, and anthropologists [wondered] if Native Americans had a particular genetic weakness when it comes to European diseases. Specifically, could their immune systems have been so strongly adapted to local maladies that they were unprepared to fight off novel pathogens?

In short, yes, Lindo and his team report, at least when it comes to the [Coast Tsimshian people].

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The researchers found...a pattern [revealing positive selection] in a gene called *HLA-DQA1*, part of a family of genes that can help fight off small pox, measles, and tuberculosis.

In other words, the same genes that kept Tsimshian people healthy before European diseases arrived also helped get them sick.

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“[T]he selection pressure shift could correlate to the European-borne epidemics of the 1800s, suffered in the Northwest Coast region,” the authors write.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [How Native American Genes Tell the Story of Europeans’ Arrival](#)