Ancient incompatibility: Why human females and Neanderthal males had difficulty conceiving

After years of sequencing the genomes of female Neandertals, researchers have finally got their first good look at the Y chromosome of a male Neandertal—and found that it is unlike that of any other Y in modern humans living today. Even though Neandertals and modern humans interbred several times in the past 100,000 years, the DNA on the Y chromosome from a male Neandertal who lived at El Sidrón, Spain, 49,000 years ago has not been passed onto modern humans, researchers report.

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This has suggested that female modern humans and male Neandertals were not fully compatible and that male Neandertals may have had problems with sperm production. The new study finds a clue to why: The El Sidrón Neandertal had mutations in three immune genes, including one that produces antigens that can elicit an immune response in pregnant women, causing them to reject and miscarry male fetuses with those genes.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: Modern human females and male Neanderthals had trouble making babies. Here's why