

Neanderthals and humans lived equally 'risky, stressful lives'

Life as a Neanderthal was no picnic, but a new analysis says it was no more dangerous than what our own species faced in ancient times.

That challenges what the authors call the prevailing view of our evolutionary cousins, that they lived risky, stressful lives. Some studies have suggested they had high injury rates, which have been blamed on things like social violence, attacks by carnivores, a hunting style that required getting close to large prey, and the hazards of extensive travel in environments full of snow and ice.

While it's true that their lives were probably riskier than those of people in today's industrial societies, the vastly different living conditions of those two groups mean comparing them isn't really appropriate, said Katerina Harvati of the University of Tuebingen in Germany.

A better question is whether Neanderthals faced more danger than our species did when we shared similar environments and comparable lifestyles of mobile hunter-gatherers, she and study co-authors say in a [paper](#) released [November 14] by the journal Nature.

To study that, they focused on skull injuries. They reviewed prior studies of fossils from western Eurasia that ranged from about 80,000 to 20,000 years old. In all they assessed data on 295 skull samples from 114 individual Neanderthals, and 541 skull samples from 90 individuals of our own species, Homo sapiens.

Injury rates turned out to be about the same in both species.

Read full, original post: [Skulls reveal Neanderthals, humans had similarly harsh lives](#)