

Preserved human brains: 4,400 date back nearly 12,000 years

Historically, [human brains](#) were considered to decay swiftly after death, making their preservation a rarity. However, [Oxford University forensic anthropologist Alexandra] [Morton-Hayward's research](#) just published by [The Royal Society](#) tells a different story. Her team has uncovered an extensive archive of over 4,400 human brains dating back nearly 12,000 years. These brains, found across diverse environments—from the icy terrains of the [North Pole](#) to the dry deserts of [Ancient Egypt](#)—challenge the notion that brains are among the first organs to decompose.

The preserved brains showcased a wide array of conditions, with textures varying from brittle and dry to soft and spongy. Interestingly, a significant portion of these brains were discovered in bodies where no other soft tissues survived, presenting a unique phenomenon in the realm of archaeological discoveries.

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The diversity and age of the preserved brains offer an unparalleled resource for studying ancient [diseases](#), cognition, and behavior. As Morton-Hayward notes, "Ancient brains may provide new and unique paleobiological insights." This research could revolutionize our understanding of neurological development and disorders, offering a window into the health and lifestyle of our ancestors.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the full article here**](#)