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Maria Warne

University of Northern Colorado

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Children's Health and Social Changes in Ancient Albania

Maria Warne, *Anthropology*

Faculty Sponsor: Britney Kyle

Subadult skeletons are often underrepresented in the archaeological record but provide an abundance of information about how environment and lifestyle affect a population. This study examines indicators of stress in children from the Prehistoric to Medieval periods at Apollonia and Durres, Albania. Durres and Apollonia were initially occupied by local Illyrians, but were later colonized by the Greeks (c. 600 B.C.) and Romans (c. 250 B.C.). This study tests the null hypothesis that there will be no difference in child health across time periods, age, and location. One hundred subadult (ages 0 to 20 years old) skeletons from Durres (n=47) and Apollonia (n=53) were scored for non-specific stress indicators including cribra orbitalia, porotic hyperostosis, and linear enamel hypoplasia. Non-specific stress indicators are not indicative of specific diseases; instead, they show signs of physiological stress that have occurred in a person's life due to nutritional deficiency or illness. Chi-squared tests were run to look at the presence of these conditions by geographic location, and odds ratio will be run to examine these conditions by time period and age. The results indicate that the majority of subadults (55%) died between ages 0-5 years (68% of subadults from Apollonia and 40% of subadults from Durres). Findings show no clear patterns are evident from these post-colonized populations in skeletal stress through time or between the two sites, which supports the null hypothesis that there was no change in childhood health. However, prevalence of cribra orbitalia decreased with age; 62% of subadults ages 0-5 had cribra orbitalia in contrast to 33% of subadults who survived to ages 16-20. This research suggests that infants who experienced stress early in life were less likely to survive to adulthood.