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Tentative Title of Dissertation:

The Intersections of Health and Wealth: Socioeconomic Status, Frailty, and Mortality in Industrial England

Abstract:

This study uses skeletal samples to examine the interactions of socioeconomic status (SES), age, sex, exposure to physiological stressors, and mortality in the context of industrialization in 19th century England. It addresses the limitations of previous studies of SES in the past by incorporating statistical approaches that account for potential sources of error common in bioarchaeological studies (e.g., heterogeneity in frailty) and interpreting the results in light of current theoretical perspectives espoused by social scientists and health researchers investigating the connection between SES and health in living populations (intersectionality theory). The primary objectives of this project are to determine how morbidity and mortality in industrial England differed between SES groups and investigate how physiological stressors throughout life interacted with socially meaningful categories such as age and sex to produce layered marginalizations that influenced frailty and mortality. To achieve these objectives, data will be collected on individuals interred in a high-status cemetery from London and three lower status cemeteries from London, Wolverhampton, and North Shields, UK. Data on age, sex, and skeletal stress markers (linear enamel hypoplasia, cribra orbitalia, periosteal new bone formation, craniofacial fluctuating asymmetry, vertebral neural canal size, and tooth size) will be incorporated into hazards analysis, as well as non-parametric analyses (hierarchical log-linear analysis and ANOVA). The results will be interpreted in light of intersectionality theory and biocultural information from archaeological and historical sources, to investigate how social identities and biological characteristics overlapped to affect aspects of lived experience in the past.