

Short-Form Index of Care (Teaching)

Notes for Faculty

The goal of this activity is to get students to think about the need for, and implications of, health-related care in the past. Students undertaking this activity should have some knowledge of archaeological terms, as well as an understanding that, in certain cases, pathology-related alterations may be observed in skeletal remains. They should also have had an introduction to the bioarchaeology of care approach.

We have tried to achieve a balance between case study detail and the time constraints of the classroom. Students will (or at least *should*) struggle to fully contextualize or explain the case study on the evidence provided, and because of this, some students may regard the case studies as 'flawed'. However, inherent to all archaeological sites is their incompleteness. We believe there is enough information for students to assess whether or not the subject of the case study potentially needed health-related care, while coming to appreciate that context will almost always make or break bioarchaeological interpretations.

Here are some tips to help students work through the activity:

Introduction

Instructors should provide an overview of the bioarchaeology of care approach, with time spent on the four Stages which are the basis for the Index of Care's four Steps. Before students begin the activity, instructors are encouraged to highlight the limits to any archaeological study and to emphasize that, while students don't have all the information for the case study individual they might like, archaeologists must work with what is available. There is not necessarily a *right* answer; as with most archaeological research, we're very unlikely to achieve 100% certainty in interpretation. Nevertheless, it's possible to draw valid conclusions based on the preponderance of evidence available.

Highlight the glossary containing key terms, which will help troubleshoot both the contextual information provided as well as the form students are being asked to complete.

Activity Notes

Students should begin by reading the case study information on the individual and their archaeological context. The instructor should then briefly walk students through the *Short-Form Index* form, using the Flowchart provided to explain the progression from basic description of the individual, through implications of pathology, to assessment of likely need for care. The 'at a glance' Flowchart should also kickstart consideration of questions of timing of skeletal change, duration of impact, and relationships between 'clinical' and 'functional'.

Students may struggle with identifying the Project Name or Site No. Instructors are encouraged to emphasize the importance of documentation for any archaeological site, particularly the standardization needed for documenting skeletal remains.

Students should work through the *Short-Form Index* systematically. To the best of their abilities, they should document the pathological alterations. Once students have identified the type of disease affecting the individual, they should consider the duration of this disease. Not all students will have the same level of confidence in their assessment, and when they are unsure, they are encouraged to state this. As students move into the impacts section(s), encourage them to think beyond the skeletal evidence. How might soft tissue be involved in the skeletal changes they are observing, and over what period might such consequences have lasted? What kind of impacts might these skeletal alterations imply for day-to-day activities within the individual's lifeways environment, and for how long might the individual have been affected?

Once students have completed the *Short Form Index*, they are asked to consider whether health-related care was likely needed. If the answer is 'yes', students should be prompted to consider what level and type(s) of care may have been required. For example - where did this care fall on the continuum between 'intensive care' (time-consuming, hands-on care) and 'accommodation of difference' (adaptions to lifeways' demands to make life easier)? What might such care have looked like in practice? What sort of skills and resources may have gone into providing care? Who may have been involved in giving care – directly and indirectly?

In addressing all questions students should refer to the case study content and, as appropriate, explain their reasoning behind the answers they're proposing.

Providing Feedback

Instructors are encouraged to have students respond to feedback questions on *Short Form Index of Care* activity. We are committed to making this teaching tool as useful to students *and* as student-friendly as possible, and their feedback is greatly valued.

Closing the Activity

Upon completing the activity, instructors are encouraged to discuss the approaches taken in students' assessment of the need for care. Emphasis should be placed on the need for context to make fuller interpretations. Instructors are encouraged to share the publication(s) on which the case study is based, giving students have the opportunity to access further more information (see 'Sources - Short-Form Index case studies.pdf' for details).

Differing conclusions regarding 'care status' are to be expected. Instructors are encouraged to return to this variability, pointing out that interpretations will tend to vary, based on our personal experiences. This bias is almost inevitable in all archaeological research, and emphasizing its commonality is useful in helping to make students aware of this.