

Peer Review

Review of: "Dietary Heritages at the Dawn of Humankind in Sub-Saharan Africa"

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The title "Dietary Heritages at the Dawn of Humankind in Sub-Saharan Africa" is not explicit: is this about something that we, as modern humans, inherit from early hominins? The hypothesis is that local food eaten in Africa is the continuation of hominin cultures. *If this is the case, do we have any knowledge of what they were eating?*

Ancient foods incorporate the complex milieu of phytonutrients in grains, native plants, mushrooms, fruits, legumes, nuts, honey, and seeds, being the nutritious building blocks of each heritage diet, essential for ensuring sustainable food security. Very

You write: "The main overarching theme addressed in this topic is to try and match human evolution with the progress of dietary heritage in radically different SSA regions, ranging from rainforests to deserts, our ancient ancestors rising in a variety of landscapes and locations, where first human remains of *Homo sapiens* evolved in East African savannas."

In other terms, it is "we are what we eat"; if we eat something different, we must evolve into somebody different; you define it as "adaptive interactions of foods and diets with human biological systems, culture and environment". This is a very interesting endeavour.

Another interesting point is the self-medication value of foods: "What foods people ate in the past, how foods were prepared, ..., and may give an indication of chronic disease prevention. "

Hominins ate starch (17), mainly from tubers; modern African people eat tuber starch. This only shows that tuber starch was available then and is available today. But are these the same plants? Do they convey the same phytonutrients? To date, it is all speculative. Same for other dietary components.

There is a vast amalgam in periods: you write "In Egypt and Eritrea, burial chamber paintings and low-reliefs portraying men fishing in constructed puddles, illustrate the effective farming of fish as early as

2500 BC. ". How does that relate to "the Dawn of Humankind"?

There is also a description of about everything that can be eaten in Africa. How does that relate to the Dawn of Humankind?

Authors cite a study that could be a model.

Linares-Matás GJ, Clark J (2022). "Seasonality and Oldowan Behavioral Variability in East Africa." Journal of Human Evolution. 164. doi:10.1016/j.jhevol.2021.103070.

This review is an ill-focused mosaic of copy-pasted facts; all relation with early hominins is speculative.

I do not think that it has the merit to be published.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.