

## 4,200-Year-Old Skeleton With Signs of Cancer Uncovered

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(NBC News) A team of Spanish researchers announced Tuesday that they had discovered a 4,200-year-old skeleton of a woman with what Egyptian authorities are calling the world's oldest evidence of breast cancer, Reuters reported.

The bones of the woman showed "an extraordinary deterioration," which suggested that the cancer had spread there from her breast, Egyptian Antiquities Minister Mamdouh el-Damaty said in a statement Tuesday.

The discovery of cancer so long ago suggests that cancer is not merely disease of modern lifestyles, but also an ancient scourge as well.

Cancer is one of the world's leading causes of death today, but references to the disease are sparse in archaeological records — giving rise to the idea that cancers are mainly due to modern lifestyles. Tuesday's findings, along with evidence reported last year by British researchers of metastatic cancer in a 3,000-year-old skeleton found in a tomb in modern Sudan, suggest that cancer was known in the ancient Nile Valley.

The Spanish research team, based at the University of Jaen and led by the University of Granada's Miguel Ortega, said the Egyptian woman was an aristocrat from Elephantine. Her remains were discovered in the necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa, west of the southern city of Aswan, the ministry said.

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