

Iceman may have been infertile

February 3 2006

The prehistoric man discovered in 1991 on a glacier in the Alps had roots in Central Europe and may have been infertile, say Italian researchers.

Researchers at the University of Camerino used mitochondrial DNA removed and isolated from the contents of his mummified intestines to perform their analysis, the BBC reported Friday.

Oetzi, the prehistoric man, had been frozen in a glacier for 5,000 years, until hikers found him 15 years ago.

"We screened sites, which have been described by other scientists as being linked to other pathologies or environmental adaptations -- a couple of these sites have been described as being linked to reduced sperm mobility and we found both on Oetzi's mitochondrial DNA," Dr. Franco Rollo, of the University of Camerino told the BBC.

"We cannot say for certain that he was suffering from this -- reduced sperm mobility-- but there is a chance."

The study is published in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology.

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Citation: Iceman may have been infertile (2006, February 3) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-02-iceman-infertile.html>

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