

# Med students to study dinosaur ailments

March 1 2006

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The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine is launching a unique program to teach medical students the evolutionary history of humans and animals.

Partnering with the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, the university says by learning the origins of human disease, such as back pain and cancer -- which existed in Jurassic Age dinosaurs -- students should better understand contemporary public health concerns.

Scientists say there are myriad common medical ailments whose roots can be traced back millions of years, when our human ancestors evolved from walking on all fours to standing on their two hind legs.

Cancer can be dated back even further since Carnegie Museum of Natural History researchers have proof by way of a 150-million-year-old Jurassic dinosaur bone, its tumor still preserved.

Understanding the origins of human diseases could help identify fresh avenues toward their prevention and treatment. At the very least, university officials said, an appreciation of the evolutionary history of humans and other animals should produce better medical doctors and physician-scientists.

The partnership -- the Natural History of Medicine Initiative -- is the first of its kind involving a medical school and natural history museum.

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