Ancient handprints on cave walls in Spain found to include children's hands

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A trio of researchers from Universidad de Cantabria and the University of Cambridge has found evidence suggesting that up to a quarter of all ancient handprints found on cave walls in Spain were made using children's hands. In their paper published in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*, Verónica Fernández-Navarro, Edgard Camarós and Diego Garate describe their study of ancient hand prints found in five Spanish caves and what they believe their findings suggest about ancient hand prints on cave walls in general.

Over the past several decades, hand prints on cave walls have come to represent ancient cave art as much as drawings of animals. Scientists studying the handprints have generally agreed that they, along with the animal drawings, were all likely done by males in a given group. In this new effort, the researchers have found evidence suggesting that up to a quarter of all cave hand prints were made using children's hands.

In looking at their data, they found that up to 25% of the hand prints on the walls in five caves in Spain were of children's hands, some of which could have come from toddlers or even infants. They suggest their findings indicate that doing cave art was a group activity shared among all members, including children. They also suggest their findings hint that some other ancient forms of art, left behind as artifacts, may have been done by children.
