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Dear Dr. Dechant:

I am submitting this request for access to the Atkinson cranial collections. I was hired as an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at San Francisco State University in 2007, and I have extensive experience in bioarcheology. I heard about this collection from my colleagues, Dr. David Hunt of the Smithsonian Institution, and Dr. Mark Griffin of SFSU.

I am currently working on a project that examines orbital lesions in various populations. In the field of bioarchaeology, much attention has been focused on the presence of marrow hyperplasia and orbital lesion of cribra orbitalia and its relationship to anemia. However, while analyzing crania from the Channel Island populations of Southern California, I noted posterior porosity and vascular impressions that were consistent with an inflammatory process rather than marrow hyperplasia. Other unusual lesions include bony plaques, curvilinear patterns of porosity extending from the lacrimal fossa to the superior orbital fissure, diffuse woven bone apposition, and various nodular bone deposits (often located at the lacrimal fossa). It is my contention that scoring of orbital lesions that focuses on classic "cribra orbitalia", overlooks the diversity in their presentation and possibly their etiology.

I have documented the distribution of these lesions in several North American populations, and I presented a paper on my initial findings at the 2008 Paleopathology Association Meetings (attached power point presentation and abstract). One problem with archeological specimens is the difficulty of distinguishing pathological lesions from taphonomic lesions. I am interested in examining anatomical collections to eliminate this taphonomic factor, determine if any similar lesions are present in historic populations, and if so, determine if there are any correlations in the types of lesions present in individuals (multiple lesions are not unusual in the collections I have viewed so far). Although I did find lesions in adults, children usually express these types of lesions most commonly and severely, so they would be my target group for this project.

Age groups: 18 months to 5 yrs

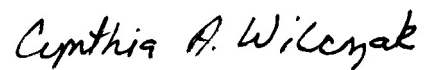
Nature of Study: visual examination of orbits and digital photographs (representative examples)

Additional visitors: I will also be requesting permission to have a M.A. candidate from SFSU, Veronika Zimova-Hopkins (c.v. also attached), work on this project with me. We would both come to start with, and perhaps later request permission for her to also work independently after you have had the chance to meet her and observe her at work. She has taken my classes in Bioarchaeology and Paleopathology and worked in the Repatriation Lab at SFSU so she has experience working with human remains.

Time Frame: I am on a more flexible schedule as far as a beginning date, but I would like my graduate student to be able to collect some data this semester. Both Ms. Zimova-Hopkins and I have Thursdays entirely free, so this would be an ideal day of the week to schedule any initial visits. Let me know if accessing the collections before May is possible. I anticipate needing 5-6 visits for approximately 185 individuals in the age range I am interested in, although it may take more time if the lesions are more frequent than I anticipate.

Agreement of product: If my research visit is approved, I agree to provide the Ward Museum with a summary of my research findings as well as copies of any abstracts, papers, or other academic works, resulting from this study.

Best regards,



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