

Public Abstract

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Title:Traditional Kinship Structures and European-Derived Diseases at Mission San Diego, California: A Study of the 1805-1806 Measles Epidemic

European-derived diseases were a major cause of morbidity and mortality among California indigenous populations during the 18th and 19th centuries. This study uses a combination of historical and demographic analysis and a computer simulation model to investigate the impact of the 1806 measles epidemic on the neophyte population at Mission San Diego.

Historical analysis revealed an increase in deaths at the mission at a time consistent with the 1806 epidemic at other missions in California. However, simulation results do not support the notion that this was a virgin soil epidemic of measles in this population and were not entirely consistent with observed historical data. Therefore, it cannot be unequivocally asserted that the deaths at San Diego were caused by measles.

Future research will focus on further refinement of the computer model to test additional hypotheses about infectious disease in this population.