

**BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR
BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
AND OSTEOARCHAEOLOGY
(BABAO)**

**Written Submission to the Working
Group on Human Remains prepared
on behalf of BABAO by
Professor Margaret Cox,
School of Conservation Sciences,
Bournemouth University**

Author's contact details:

School of Conservation Sciences
Bournemouth University
Talbot Campus
Poole, BH12 5BB
mcox@bournemouth.ac.uk
Tel: 01202 595471; Fax: 01202 595255

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1.0 Introduction

The British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology (BABAO) was established in 1999 with the intent of drawing together expertise and interest in all areas of analysis of human remains. It seeks to promote the study of human remains in the interests of bioarchaeology, comparative anatomy, palaeontology and biological, forensic and medical anthropology. It provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and information on all aspects of the analysis and interpretation of human remains from all temporal and spatial zones. BABAO includes representatives from the UK and elsewhere involved in the excavation and analysis of human remains, tertiary and post-graduate education, and curation of human remains, whether based in Universities, archaeological units, museums or other organisations. BABAO includes those involved in this discipline at all levels ranging from established high-ranking professionals, with decades of experience, international reputations and credibility, through to students. It also seeks to protect the legitimate interests of members in the pursuit of the disciplines represented.

This report has been prepared by the author on behalf of BABAO, incorporating some comments from members, in response to the request for submissions to the Working

Group on Human Remains chaired by Professor Norman Palmer. This Group has its origins in the Select Committee Report on Cultural Property (2000).

The first documented occasion when human remains were considered ‘useful’ and consequently valued, dates from the Old Testament when Jezabel was identified from her hands, feet and skull (II Kings 9: 30-37). While being doubtful that contemporary methods would satisfy today’s judicial system, what is apparent from the biblical reference is that past peoples were aware of some aspects of the information inherent within human remains. It is clear from archaeological assemblages that, from the Upper Palaeolithic into the historic period, human remains *per se* were valued as a resource in cultural and political terms and consequently utilized within society (i.e. selected and modified) ritually, or otherwise. Since that time human remains, in various forms, have been recovered from a wide range of temporal and spatial contexts and retained by contemporaries for their own reasons.

A key premise exists for the long-term, if not permanent, curation and retention of existing and forthcoming collections of such remains in UK museums and other curating institutions such as universities. This lies within the fact that each generation of researchers reinterpret the past, in this case, human remains, within their own cultural framework and within the constraints of contemporary methodologies whether macro- or microscopic, or chemical. That said, even within each generation of researchers changing socio-political, ideological, scientific, technological and other parameters shift research emphases to reflect new preoccupations and research agendas, and new opportunities. As such, it is imperative that collections of human remains are retained within our museums (and elsewhere) representing the broadest possible spatial and temporal range. This scientific imperative is placed within an era when general interest in understanding past lives from human remains has unprecedented levels of public support from grass-roots level and above.

2.0 Principal factors for consideration

The rationale for retaining existing and forthcoming collections of human remains within *bona-fida* institutions is various and most categories in which value can be expressed cross over into others. What follows is a brief description of the principal categories of value into which the analysis of human remains fall. This is combined with an explanation of why collections (and individual specimens) of such remains should be considered an irreplaceable and unique collection of material for the legitimate pursuance and enhancement of scientific and humanities based research.

2.1 Changing socio-political and ideological parameters

As would be expected, prior to the mid-twentieth century more recent analysis of human remains focussed upon areas of research that were expressions of contemporary socio-political concerns and preoccupations. Consequently, the collection and retention of human remains focussed upon ‘different’ ethnic groups, remains recovered from high status sites (e.g. Egyptian and pre-Columbian mummies) and anatomical elements (such as skulls) which were considered important in addressing contemporary concerns (e.g. ‘white’ supremacy). In obtaining such collections, contemporary values (e.g. nationalism, imperialism etc.) and standards pertained, leading to the acquisition of materials that might not be acceptable in light of current values. However, today’s researchers continue to study those remains, asking different questions of the same materials, questions that are entirely legitimate and achievable within today’s socio-political framework and utilizing available scientific approaches.

The mid- to late-twentieth century saw a more comprehensive strategy applied to the acquisition of assemblages, albeit frequently underpinned by the serendipitous nature of archaeological opportunities, and more latterly the influence of planning policies (PPG 16, Nov 1990) upon excavation. This strategy also reflected a broader range of academic interests, which encompass all socio-economic groups, and special sites such as hospitals

(Price R, Ponsford M, 1998) and monasteries (Kemp R, Graves CP, 1996) offering opportunities for specific research foci.

2.1.1. Changing professional and educational backgrounds

Since the 1980s, the educational and professional backgrounds of practitioners in the study of human remains has shifted from being predominantly medical to a more balanced position today whereby more than 50% of all practitioners hail from archaeological backgrounds. This has resulted in a shift of focus in the emphasis of research from disease, health and the history of medicine to such aspects of past lives as demography, cultural practice, diet, taphonomy and diagenesis, and mortuary ritual. This transition also witnessed a shift from case study based research to more meaningful population studies. The author of this report has recently been awarded a grant to study peri- and post-mortem modification of human bone from prehistoric assemblages held in UK museums and universities. It would have been impossible to obtain such funding twenty (or even ten) years ago. The important point here is that had the bone assemblages in question been reburied or repatriated after the initial analysis, re-evaluation of an assemblage with new research objectives, and new methods, would have been impossible.

2.2 Scientific development

The range of analyses applied in the last decade or so to both pre-existing and more recently acquired collections has been influenced greatly by rapid technological and scientific advance. These provide methodologies, and consequently results, that offer insights into new areas and into aspects of human lives that were hitherto inaccessible because of the lack of appropriate methods. The academic importance of such scientific work on human remains is reflected in the many studies published in scientific journals around the world (e.g. Tohme JF *et al.* 1997). Britain is indisputably one of the leading world centres for scientific work on human remains. This is due in no small part to the

large collections available for study in UK museums. The emergence of new research directions and the development of new analytical techniques (such as amplification of ancient DNA) means that new information may be obtained from existing collections of skeletons, and that consequently, UK museum collections continue to attract researchers from all over the world.

An example of the application of new methodologies to museum collections can be seen in research recently published (Buckley SA, Evershed RP, 2001) on chemical analyses of the embalming agents used in Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman mummification. This article has achieved widespread publicity in the national and international media. Buckley and Evershed's samples included human tissue as well as samples of mummy wrapping. These samples were provided by the British Museum, the National Museum of Scotland and the city museums of Manchester, Liverpool and Bristol. Without continued retention and curation of such samples by the institutions in question, this work and the advances in knowledge and understanding it represents, would not have been possible.

There is continuing scientific value in museum collections because new techniques of investigation continue to be developed and applied to existing research problems. Furthermore, entirely new scientific questions emerge as science develops. Thus new generations of scientists continue to return to UK museum collections to address emerging research topics. While it is arguable that CT-imaging and replicas can substitute for actual remains in some morphometric studies, they are totally unsuitable for most research because they lack the resolution required for detailed histological and other types of sub-macroscopic examination (e.g. trabecular structure, perikymata, diagenesis, palaeohistopathology). Replication and images cannot be used for DNA studies or for chemical analyses (e.g. isotope analyses for dietary reconstruction and provenancing). Without representative collections of human skeletal material from different periods and regions, we will simply be unable to answer fundamental questions concerning human origins, variation and biology in the future. A specific example here could be the continued retention of native Tasmanian skeletons. These now provide research opportunities that were inconceivable at the time of their collection. Because of the

extinction of the living population, the preserved Tasmanian skeletal remains are irreplaceable and represent a unique source of genetic information to which DNA analysis can be applied, as well as providing an important research collection for future scientific research.

Given the pace of scientific advance, it is our view that long-term curation of such remains is essential, if for no other reason than the impossibility of devising a selective reburial policy that could have any validity other than in the immediate present. In this context in particular, it is impossible to know which of our assemblages of human remains are likely to assume prime importance in years to come. Neither can we predict the nature of the techniques for sub-microscopic and chemical analysis of human tissue that will be devised even within the next five years, or the questions that will be addressed by their application. Such is the current pace of the advance of science.

2.3 The study of archaeological assemblages and specimens

Human skeletal material (and other types of human remains such as mummies and bog-bodies) curated within our museums (and other institutions) is essential evidence if we are to gain a fuller understanding of various aspects of particular societies at certain times in our past. This is illustrated by examples of recent textbooks (Mays S. 1998; Larsen CS, 1997). The importance of human remains in archaeology is also illustrated by the fact that their study is a component of almost all undergraduate archaeology courses offered by British universities (thirty plus in total). Further to this, a burgeoning number of taught masters courses, covering various aspects of scientific work on skeletal remains, is taught by those universities offering specific areas of expertise in the analysis of human remains (e.g. Bournemouth, Bradford, Sheffield, London, Southampton, Birmingham, Durham). This increasing post-graduate provision means that for the first time, we now have a sufficiently large scientific community of well-educated and appropriately trained researchers in the analysis of human remains. As a consequence we are now in a position

to ensure that many assemblages that have not been used for research in the recent past, can be examined in light of new research agendas and using new scientific approaches.

A wide range of topics falling within archaeological research frameworks can be enriched by the analysis of data from human remains, which can then be combined with understanding obtained from other archaeological approaches. These include such areas of interest as the examination of population movements and migrations (Mays S, 2000) cultural practice such as infanticide (Mays S, 1995) and gender issues (Grauer, AL, Stuart-MacAdam P, 1998). Even less palatable aspects of human nature can also be addressed such as warfare, weapon technology and use (e.g. Fiorato V *et al.* 2000). Such research may involve the examination of a number of human remains from a single location to establish such issues as specific cultural practice, or temporal change in topics such as warfare. Alternatively, particularly for understanding larger-scale patterns of variation, it may involve comparison of remains from many locations in different parts of the world to look at the influence of such factors as environment and migration.

2.3.1 Human evolution and hominid development

Studies of large collections of human skeletal material from different periods and regions are vital in the investigation of human origins and evolution, and help to explain variations in morphology through time and space. Such work ranges from research on pre-modern humans, such as the Neanderthals, through to examination of relatively recent populations, seeking to explain patterns of variation, the impact of diet and disease, and the nature of interactions with the environment. At one end of the time scale, there is palaeontological research on our hominid ancestors and close relatives, where the morphological range of recent humans provides a fundamental framework through which to assess past populations. As an example, several recent studies have shown that Neanderthals grew and matured in a manner distinct from living humans. (See for example: Ponce de León MS *et al.* in press; Thompson JL, Nelson AJ, 1998). Such a conclusion would not have been possible without the availability of a range of recent human samples as comparative samples. Similarly, the availability of modern material for

understanding human variation in skeletal and dental development is crucial for addressing such important evolutionary issues as the possibility that the Lagar Velho child remains represent a hybrid form (See: Duarte C *et al.* 1999).

Collections of human skeletal material from different periods and regions provide essential comparative evidence in understanding a wide range of scientific questions on early hominid development and other evolutionary issues. Some of the remains in museum and university collections are from regions of high genetic, linguistic and cultural diversity and were collected at a time when the population groups they represent remained in a state of relative isolation. It cannot be stressed strongly enough that these well provenanced and dated collections are irreplaceable, and most are unique.

2.3.2 *Palaeodemography*

Assessment of biological sex, age at death and parity status are all crucial variables in the determination of mortality and fertility rates and change in these through time and space. As with so many areas of our research, this is particularly crucial for periods before which surviving and representative historical sources serve to provide an alternative source of information. The study of population dynamics in past populations from their mortal remains is, however, one of the most difficult aspects of the analysis of human skeletons (See: Cox M, 2000; Cox M, 2001). This lies in our current inability to accurately determine age at death of adults dying over the age of thirty. (At which time skeletal maturation is complete and after which ageing subsequently depends upon assessment of degeneration and remodelling which are neither linear, constant or predictable.)

It is now generally accepted that previously published determinations of mortality profiles of archaeological assemblages of human remains are flawed, over-ageing young adults and under-ageing the over-forties. As such it is imperative that skeletal samples currently held by curating institutions are retained for accurate age determination, at such a time in the future when this can be reliably undertaken. It should further be stressed that

age at death is crucial in understanding trends in the prevalence rates of disease and trauma affecting bone and teeth in the past in different regions of the UK and the rest of the world, and changes in such trends in health through time.

2.3.2 *Palaeopathology*

Palaeopathology is the study of the evolution and progress of disease and health through time, and examines how humans adapt to changes in their environment. Numerous general texts have been published on this subject (Roberts and Manchester, 1995; Roberts and Cox, in press) as well as articles in a broad range of international academic journals. Initially, the focus of research in palaeopathology was on single ‘interesting’ skeletons by dentists and medically trained practitioners with no archaeological background. Since that time, palaeopathology has developed into a sophisticated discipline utilising myriad modern techniques to study the aetiology and nature of disease in contrasting populations, both in their own right and to address broad archaeological questions. Key to the development of the discipline are the pathological specimens held in many medical schools throughout the UK. For example, collections in the Royal College of Surgeons in London and Edinburgh, and University Museums such as those in Leeds and Oxford, provide invaluable examples of skeletal pathology in individuals whose clinical history is documented.

Collections of known-age and sex individuals from post-medieval contexts are rare and their continued availability to researchers is vital if such questions as age related and male-female susceptibility to disease are to be addressed with confidence, and aspects of human ecology explored. A recent study on the post-medieval sample of Christ Church Spitalfields, held at the Natural History Museum in London has provided primary evidence for the deterioration of child health during the Industrial Revolution (Lewis ME, in prep). Recent research into Egyptian mummies held at the Manchester Museum has advanced our understanding of the epidemiology of Bilharzia (parasitic Schistosomiasis). With the Ministry of Health in Egypt and the Medical Service Corporation International in the US, UK researchers have, for the first time provided a detailed study of a disease in

a discreet population over a 5000-year period (Contis G, David, AR, 1996). Scientific advances contribute to this aspect of research in many and varied ways and also include the extraction of aDNA, examining the pathogenesis of such bacterial disease processes as leprosy, tuberculosis and syphilis. Such work is carried out by scientists cognisant of the value of this material and with a profound respect for the remains that they handle.

2.4 Historical research

Archaeological evidence can contribute significantly to historical studies from the medieval and post-medieval periods when they both supplement and provide a counterpoint to historical sources. An increasing number of assemblages from the later periods are now being excavated and these offer invaluable opportunities for enhancing our understanding of the health and life styles of later populations. They also provide samples on which to assess a wide range of variables including such topics as: examination of the impact of rural / urban differences in living conditions, the impact of advances in medical and dental treatments (Cox MJ *et al.* 2000) and of increased industrialisation on adult health (Waldron HA, Cox MJ, 1989). What is unique about such periods is that we have an abundance of written sources to underpin our analyses and interpretations and against which to test hypotheses.

Further to this, some later assemblages are of known identity (i.e. recovered with associated legible coffin plates) and biographies can be reconstructed for such individuals from genealogical sources. These known identity samples provide a unique and internationally important reference collection against which to test existing methods for accuracy (e.g. sex and age determination) and upon which to develop and evaluate new methodologies. This has been demonstrated most significantly upon the Christ Church, Spitalfields collection held by the Natural History Museum, London (Molleson TI, Cox MJ, 1993; Cox M, 1996) which continues to attract large numbers of researchers from around the world.

2.5 Forensic applications

Much of the science that underpins forensic anthropology is developed and extrapolated from biological anthropology and has been developed upon archaeological samples, including some of known age and sex. This also pertains to such issues as our understanding of disease and trauma as they apply to forensic cases in the developing world. Our understanding of the impact of chronic disease processes upon skeletal tissues, when they are not mediated by modern pharmacological and surgical interventions (such as tuberculosis, leprosy and syphilis), is based upon archaeological data. The same is true of healed trauma such as fractures and dislocations, as well as weapon injury. Similarly, understanding of the survival and decomposition of bone in buried deposits is enhanced by archaeological observation, which can then assist in our interpretation of modern cases. One such case-study, based upon four archaeological assemblages currently held by three different UK institutions (English Heritage, the Museum of London and Bristol City Museum), provided material and data which was then contrasted with evidence from a modern forensic case (Cox MJ, Bell LM, 1999). The results of this analysis will prevent missing skeletal elements from being misinterpreted in future forensic cases.

2.6 Medical and clinical applications

The potential of the diachronic dimension to medical research and the potential of archaeologically contextualized material to look at such matters is only just beginning to be appreciated. Consequently, the study of museum collections of human skeletal remains enhances our understanding of some disease processes, which increasingly affect people today with consequent rising resource implications for modern society. An example here is osteoporosis, a condition which has huge resource implications for UK health services. Amongst medical researchers, the role of modern life-style factors in influencing the severity of osteoporosis is much debated. Investigating this disease in earlier European populations, who are similar in their genetic make-up to modern

Europeans, but who had very different life-styles, has helped to shed light on this condition. Although research in this area is ongoing, it seems at present that many earlier populations suffered from the disease to a similar extent to modern subjects, thus throwing doubt upon whether the course of the disease is greatly influenced by life-style. (See Mays S, 1999). A different area in which museum collections play a valuable role is in the analysis of aDNA from infecting micro-organisms. This is amplified from diseased ancient bones and such research may provide important insights into the evolution of pathogenic micro-organisms which cause diseases which are of importance today such as tuberculosis (See: Sola C *et al.* 2000).

2.7 The UK as a world-leading centre of research

A key-member of BABAO (Dr Simon Mays) sits on the committee over-seeing access to human skeletal collections in York. In his capacity as human skeletal biologist for English Heritage (since the late-1980s) he has supervised access to collections excavated from English Heritage sites. Over the years he has, in each of the above capacities, received many requests for access to collections from researchers based in Britain and around the world. These amount to about fifty per year, which by extrapolation would be consistent with more than a thousand requests for access to skeletal remains per annum to museums and other institutions over the whole of the UK. Failure to retain remains for the future would mean that we would lack the material upon which to continue current research and to maintain the UK's leading position in scientific work in this field.

In light of the present rate of scientific advance, there is a more general ethical principle in scientific research that is relevant here. Specimens should, as far as is reasonably possible, be made available to bona fide researchers for a sufficient period of time so that studies can be repeated and findings replicated by other workers. The threat of repatriation and potential removal of important materials from the research community, especially if undertaken in haste, violates this ethical principle and may damage the

integrity of scientific research in our discipline. It will also diminish the role of the UK as a leading centre of research in human remains and this is undesirable.

2.8 Public interest and awareness

The study of human remains from archaeological contexts enjoys widespread support from the general public whose interest and enthusiasm is reflected in the success and popularity of a wide range of television programmes. These include such popular genre as BBC2's 'Meet the Ancestors', Channel 4's 'Time Team' as well as more specialist approaches as those included in such series as Channel 4's 'Secrets of the Dead' and other occasional documentaries. Further, museum displays such as the recent (1999) 'London Bodies' exhibition at the Museum of London attracted a huge audience.

It is an undisputable fact that recent media interpretations of past lives focussing upon human remains have done much to increase public awareness of the science involved in the analysis of such remains, as well as increase public interest in past lives *pers se*. In light of such support it would be untimely to initiate any disposal or repatriation policy, particularly one in which those responsible for the analysis and interpretation of such remains have only been peripherally involved (see 3.0 below).

2.9 NAGPRA and issues of ethics in the origin of samples

We have all heard seemingly legitimate objections to the curation by British universities and museums of foreign aboriginal skeletal remains along the lines that many have lain on shelves for perhaps a century after the initially prescribed observations and measurements were made. However, scientific advances made during the interim ensure that their value to research continues and we are now in a position where there are enough appropriately trained scientists in the field to re-examine such remains using modern methods to address contemporary research agendas.

Within a UK context we are fortunate in being free of the political manipulation of NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 1990) and its glaring excesses (Ackerman DW, 1997; NAGPRA, 2000). UK researchers are also fortunate that we are not yet directly affected by the complex issues and precedents set by the Kennewick fiasco (Gugliotta G, 1999; Chatters JC, 2000), neither have we had to deal with such absurdities as the forced re-burial of European colonists excavated in an area currently claimed by one of the Amerindian nations. Having said this, even though such actions as described above thwart present and future scientific research, it is not difficult to understand why the groups who presently wield such power do so as a mode of revenge for arrogant colonial oppression in the past. However, it is possible to press this indignation too far and revenge is no justification for past wrongs, neither does it redress them. The extermination of the aboriginal population of Tasmania (genocide) by the end of the nineteenth century is an appalling crime by any standards and amongst the worst atrocities of colonialism. In this particular case, these facts render demands for the repatriation of remains of Tasmanian origin empty for, strictly speaking, the Tasmanians were a geographical isolate and have left no descendants to claim their remains.

The place of the nature and mode of acquisition of a collection, in determining its future, is something that demands extremely thorough examination. NAGPRA, while well-intended as a means of redressing socio-political imbalance and injustice has led to the decimation of US museum collections of human remains and other archaeological artefacts; clearly such a situation is undesirable. Because a collection was instigated or obtained through mechanisms that we today might find unacceptable, does not automatically mean that we should consider consigning it to repatriation. Perceptions of acceptability change within and between generations. While it is entirely appropriate that we should now have collection policies that are underpinned by ethical and moral constraints, to apply these retrospectively will not redress the sins of 'our fathers' but merely deny opportunities of scientific research and endeavour, which is itself unethical and wasteful of a precious and irreplaceable source of scientific information. In fact, it could be argued that we are behove to justify the original collection and subsequent

retention of such materials by ensuring that they continue to be utilised in addressing contemporary research issues.

2.9.1 Short term curation and reburial of UK assemblages

The last fifteen to ten years of UK archaeology, particularly in England have witnessed an insidious development in curatorial policy towards human remains. Whereas previously remains that were considered important enough to warrant excavation and analysis would have automatically been subject to long-term curation in an appropriate institution, the last ten years have seen the gradual move towards short-term retention. In such cases reburial has followed what is often little more than a very cursory analysis and recording exercise (e.g. Kingston-upon-Thames Quaker Burial Ground, Start H, Kirk L, 1998) or no analysis at all (e.g. Broad Street, London). The reason for this shift in policy is often that of limited resources but this can only take place within a socio-political and intellectual framework that facilitates such practice. It is possible that the reburial movement in such places as the US, Australia and Israel has insidiously affected the sub-consciousness and subsequent responses of UK planning policy advisors dealing with archaeology within the planning and development process.

What is objectionable about this apparent change of policy is that it has taken place without any discussion amongst the wider archaeological and anthropological community. The debate about the long-term retention and curation of human remains is one that should happen given the financial and ethical considerations that it raises. However, until it takes place, the knee-jerk impulse to rebury should cease until all legitimate users have engaged in a full and considered debate about the subject. The argument put forward by some curators that reburial will allow future re-excavation and subsequent analysis by researchers is misplaced and naïve. To excavate bone that is in a state of equilibrium with its burial environment from a (generally) moist but stable substrate, cleaning it and allowing it to dry out alters the bio-chemical status of the bone. If it then remains cool and dry little further deterioration will occur, but if it is then replaced in the ground, further unquantifiable deterioration and dissolution of bone

mineral will take place. On the same theme, the occasional rafting of burial grounds as a means of not disturbing human remains is also unacceptable archaeologically and, I would suggest, ethically. The process of rafting (or piling) to facilitate development will affect site hydrology and consequently the bio-chemistry of the substrate. This will in turn lead to the deterioration of buried human remains. This situation is in itself unethical. If the resources do not exist to properly excavate, curate and analyse human remains then they should not be excavated, nor should they be compromised by engineering solutions for which the archaeological consequences are unknown but which are predictably deleterious.

3.0 Conclusions

It is the view of BABA0 that human remains currently held within UK museums, universities and other specialist institutions such as the medical colleges represent a unique and irreplaceable resource for the legitimate pursuance of scientific and other research. Such research falls within a wide range of disciplines ranging from archaeology through to clinical applications. BABA0 considers that UK collections of human remains, from all temporal and spatial regions, in different forms of preservation ranging from skeletons to mummies, should be retained as an accessible resource of material for legitimate researchers from around the world for the foreseeable future. The broad categories of value and issues for consideration are bulleted below and set out in detail in sections 1.0 and 2.0 above.

- Opportunities for new areas of research presented by advances in scientific methodologies which in itself generates new research agendas
- Changing socio-political, ideological and professional parameters
- Each generation of researchers reinterprets the past
- Public interest and support
- Contribution to archaeological knowledge and understanding
 - Human evolution and hominid development
 - Palaeodemography, population studies
 - Palaeopathology, the aetiology of disease and the history of medicine
- Contribution to historical research
- Forensic applications
- Medical and clinical applications
- UK standing as a leading centre of research of international standing
- The current political and intellectual framework imposed by NAGPRA, and other ethical issues

3.1 Recommendations

1. In light of the information contained in this report and the weight of expertise and experience that the report represents, BABAO considers it appropriate that the **WGHR supports its recommendations for the retention of all human remains currently curated within UK institutions and museums.**
2. BABAO also considers it appropriate that the **WGHR should recommend that a policy should be developed and adopted within the UK for the future of all unexcavated archaeological human remains within the UK.** Such a policy should be developed out of broad based and full consultation with all legitimate interest groups. Those groups would include representation from such interests as archaeology, anthropology, museums, medicine, forensic science, the history of medicine and disease, the law and representatives from relevant religious organisations.

Should the outcome be different from that advocated in our first point (1), and the WGHR decide to recommend the repatriation of some specimens or collections currently held within our museums, it is a matter of much concern to BABAO that such a decision could be misinterpreted by planning and development control officers, and developers. Hypothetically, in light of such a decision it is not inconceivable that when considering forthcoming development schemes (on sites which will yield human remains), such a decision might be interpreted in such a way as to allow developers to gain planning consents without the requirement for the human remains to be subject to an appropriate archaeological response. This could result in the loss of materials, information and scientific opportunities. Such decisions could perhaps be sought or implemented in order to minimise development costs. This would result in human remains being exhumed and reburied or cremated without an adequate programme of analysis and curation. In light of the potential loss of unique scientific resources, we would like to add the following recommendation:

- **That BABA O should have the opportunity to review and comment upon the WGHR's findings prior to publication** in order that we might assess the possible impact of any such form of words, in order that the eventuality outlined above should not happen.

We would like end this report by respectfully restating the point made in the letter, written by the author of this report, to Professor Palmer (dated 18th June 2001). It continues to be unfortunate that the WGHR contains no member who is directly involved in the archaeology and analysis of human remains. This situation is extremely unfortunate as such practitioners and researchers have a legitimate interest in the outcome of the deliberations of the Group, and much relevant expertise and knowledge that would serve to enhance the ability of the Group to arrive at findings that represent a balance of opinion and interest of those directly involved in the outcome.

4.0 Acknowledgements

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