INTRODUCTION

The archaeological sites of Esfola, Monte Mata Bodes and Monte do Bolor 1-2 are located in the region of Beja, Portugal (Fig.1). The archaeological works results from Minimizing Impacts from the construction of Irrigation Plan of Alqueva and were promoted by EDIA SA. Material culture ascribe these necropolises to the First Iron Age (VII and VI centuries BC).

Objectives: The aim of this study is to present preliminary results and interpretation of unusual dental wear patterns detected in some of these individuals.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The three collections reveal a total number of 22 individuals: 9 individuals from Esfola, 1 from Monte do Mata Bodes and 12 from Monte do Bolor. The teeth were examined macroscopically and using a hand lens. The presence of non-masticatory dental wear as chipping, notching, interproximal groove and slanting was detected. Dental wear was registered according to Smith 1984 (adapted by Silva,1996), unusual wear, according to Molnar (1972), chipping and notching following Bonfiglioli et al. (2004), grooving and slanting as Grant (2010) suggested.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean dental wear of these individuals is 2.14 (n=374) and 6.7% (25/374) of the teeth display cariogenic lesions. The remaining observed dental alterations are listed in table 1. Chipping (Fig.2) affects 11.5% of the upper anterior teeth (8/69) and 6.8% of the lower anterior teeth (6/88). Notching (Fig.3) was only observed in lower anterior teeth (3.3%; 1/30). Interproximal grooves (Fig.4) affected 1.4% (3/67) of upper anterior teeth, and slanting (Fig.5) was present in 3 posterior lower teeth (4.9%; n=61).

Chipping was only observed in anterior teeth of both maxilla and represent the most significative alteration observed. This alteration is associate with masticatory and non masticatory activities. However, the observed anterior pattern is more suggestive of the use of teeth in daily activities. Notching revealed low frequencies. Interproximal grooves display an unusual pattern, difficult to interpret since this alteration was observed in one anterior and two posterior teeth, all upper ones.

FINAL REMARKS

Examination of dental remains from past populations can reveal significant data about their diet and non-masticatory activities. Although the present sample of Iron Age communities is low, some inferences were obtained: these individuals display low dental wear, frequency close to 7% of caries and their chipping pattern allows to suggest the use of teeth in daily activities. More data are necessary to allow a more precise documentation and interpretation of these dental alterations.

REFERENCES


