## **Vestigial Organs Remnants of Evolution**

Written by Administrator Wednesday, 24 July 2013 06:45 -

"Vestigial Organs: Remnants of Evolution" is the headline of an article in *New Scientist*, 14 May 2008, p42. In 1893, a German anatomist named Robert Wiedersheim drew up a list of 86 human organs he considered to be "vestiges", i.e. organs "formerly of greater physiological significance than at present". As such, they have been used as evidence that human beings evolved from animals that had fully functioning versions of the organs. The classic vestigial organ is considered to be the appendix, but recent research has shown that it functions in maintaining the population of good bacteria that live in the large bowel, acting as a safe house for them when inflammation of the bowel flushes the bacteria out.

Most organs in Wiedersheim's list have since been found to have functions in humans, but there remain a few structures that biologists consider to have no significant function other than being evidence for evolution. *New Scientist* lists its top five vestigial organs: the vomeronasal organ; goose bumps; Darwin's point; the tail bone; wisdom teeth.

The vomeranasal organ (VNO) is a sensory organ in animals that detects pheromones. Humans have a similar organ in the nose. Neuroscientist Michael Meredith of Florida State University dismisses it as an evolutionary remnant because the genes that code for its cell surface receptors are inactive. He also commented: "If you look at the anatomy of the structure, you don't see any cells that look like the sensory cells in other mammalian VNOs" and "You don't see any nerve fibres connecting the organ to the brain."

Goose bumps (also known as goose flesh, or goose pimples) are the effect of a reflex that causes contraction of the tiny muscles attached to hair follicles.

Darwin's point is the name for a small bump on the edge of the ear that occurs as an inherited congenital defect in some people. It is caused by a minor disturbance in the formation of the ear in embryonic life, but some biologists believe it is the "vestige of a joint that allowed the top part of the ancestral ear to swivel or flop down over the opening to the ear."

The tail bone is a common name for the coccyx – the lower end of the vertebral column, which consists of three to five (usually four) small bony segments fused together. New Scientist claims "there are more than 100 medical reports of babies born with tails. This atavism arises if the signal that normally stops the process of vertebrate elongation during embryonic development fails to activate on time."

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Wisdom teeth are the third set of molars, erupting around the age of eighteen, and are notorious for not erupting properly because of lack of space in the jaw. Robert Corruccini of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, comments that overcrowded jaws have become more of a problem over the past four centuries as our diet has become softer and more processed. According to *New Scientist* "Not only are impacted wisdom teeth becoming more common, perhaps as many as 35 percent of people have no wisdom teeth at all, suggesting that we may be on an evolutionary trajectory to losing them altogether."

**Editorial Comment**: As this author had the "privilege" of tearing the ligaments from his tail bone and discovering that at that point – if you were standing (or sitting) – that's where you stayed, as the muscles that helped you sit or stand all gained their ability to move by their links to the tail bone – vestigial – without function – it's a painfully false statement.

The New Scientist article is part of a series of articles promoting evolution and taking swipes at creationists in preparation for the celebration of Darwin's Bicentenary in 2009. The concept of vestigial organs is inherently anti-science. If we do not know what something does, the proper scientific approach is to do some more research and find out, not write it off as useless.

Since Wiedersheim's list was published, human curiosity and advances in scientific techniques have enabled scientists to find the functions of most of the organs, but this has been in spite of evolutionary theory, not because of it. The coccyx cannot be called vestigial. It is an important anchor point for the pelvic floor muscles. The goose-bumps reflex is a sign of stress hyper-alertness. Hairs in humans are sensory organs that enhance the sense of touch. (Run your hand over a patch of hairy skin, just touching the hair, not the skin surface.) The small muscle that attaches to them causes them to stand more erect, making the skin more sensitive. When subject to strong stresses, such as fear or cold, the reflex tends to over-react and the hairs stand on end. The fact that we are subject to strong stresses is a reminder that we no longer live in the "very good" world God originally created, but the degenerate world that followed the Fall of Man and God's judgement on the whole creation, including human bodies.

Even if any organs are genuinely dysfunctional, that doesn't mean they are evidence for evolution, but actually fit with the Biblical history of the world. In the beginning the human body was a perfect creation, but like all things, it has degenerated since the Fall of Man and God's judgement on the earth. This means that defects such as a minor deformity of the ear, inadequate growth of jaws, or a defunct vomeronasal organ are simply evidence that human bodies are going downhill. (Ref. embryology, anatomy, physiology)

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