

The Roseto Mystery

Roseto Valfortore is southeast of Rome in the Appennine foothills

The Italian village Roseto Valfortore

- Medieval village organized around a large central square
- Marble quarries
- Cultivating terraced fields in the valley below
- Poverty
- Low education many illiterate
- 1882 11 Rosetans immigrated to the USA
- Started to work in stone quarries near Bangor in Pennsylvania
- Large immigration continued in 1894 a total of 1.200 immigrated
- They built a small town called Roseto

The USA village of Roseto

- A village with immigrants from the same geographical area in Italy (Roseto Valfortore) Population around 2000
- In the 1950s it was found that the life expectancy of the village was 10 years higher than people living in other villages/towns in the area
- Medical investigations in the village found that there were few heart attacks in the village while heart attacks were epidemic in the USA
- No one under 55 had died of heart attack or showed sign of heart disease
- For those over 55 the rate of heart disease was half of the US average

The dead -ends

- People from the same region in Italy (the same genetics) had the same high rate of heart disease as the rest of the population.
- People living in neighbour towns/ villages of similar size and similar economical structure/same kind of work had the same high rate of heart disease as the rest of the population.
- The people of Roseto had the same diet as other Americans
- The people in Roseto smoked as much as other Americans and if any difference they ate more unhealthy stuff (sweets, fat etc and they used unhealthy cooking lard and not the healthier olive oil that they used in Italy)

The town itself

- Many three generational families
- Strong social bonds
- Active family life and communal life
- Strong identity in local culture
- Strong attachment to the land, to the community and to the values represented by the church
- Strong sense of community
- The unifying and calming effect of the church
- The only explanation of the low rates of heart disease was the community of Roseto

References

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