
Smallpox And Importance Of Inoculation

Smallpox was one of the many diseases challenging medical personnel during the Civil War. Unlike most other diseases, the surgeons of the time had an effective way to prevent smallpox using vaccination to control outbreaks through the isolation of its victims. There was a global spread of smallpox during the 1770s. The virus was airborne and was officially eradicated in 1979. In 1975, Rahima Banu, a 3 year old girl from Bangladesh, was the last person to have active smallpox. The first successful vaccine was introduced by Edward Jenner in 1796. Germs that brought disease had a huge impact as a result of the Columbian exchange. Europeans brought smallpox and other diseases to the New World and those diseases eventually killed off as much as 90% of the native population. Therefore, I would like to talk about the key causes of the issue.

Although the origin of smallpox is unknown, smallpox is known to date back to the Egyptian Empire around the 3rd century BCE based on a smallpox-like rash found on three mummies. The earliest written description of a disease that clearly resembles smallpox appeared in China in the 4th century CE (Common Era). Early written descriptions also appeared in India in the 7th century and in Asia Minor in the 10th century. You get it mainly by breathing in the virus during close face-to-face contact with an infected person. It usually spreads through drops of saliva when the person coughs, sneezes, or speaks.

Edward Jenner is well known for his innovative contribution to immunization and the ultimate eradication of smallpox in 1796. In 1796, doctor Edward Jenner discovered a way to protect people from getting smallpox, which led to the development of the first smallpox vaccine. Millions of people died from smallpox. An estimated 300 million people died from smallpox in the 20th century alone. This virulent disease, which kills a third of those it infects, is known to have coexisted with human beings for thousands of years. Smallpox was an infection that was caused by the virus called variola virus. For thousands of years smallpox created severe illness and caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. When it was introduced into America from Europe in the 1500s, it killed many of the native populations.

Smallpox played a big role in history killing more than 500 million people. An Egyptologist found a mummified pharaoh in 1898 that had the familiar scars of smallpox, a disease whose first successful vaccination had been discovered only 100 years earlier. Today it's a medical success story, but before it was eradicated, the smallpox virus spent more than 3,000 years decimating communities across the globe. The extremely infectious disease was class-blind, killing rich and poor alike, and almost single-handedly wiped out the New World empires encountered by European explorers.

who? Smallpox

What? A disease that killed millions of people

When? Starting from the Egyptian Empire around the 3rd century

Why? The variola virus caused smallpox

Where? All around the world

Unlike smallpox, which caused severe skin eruptions and dangerous fevers in humans, cowpox led to few ill symptoms in these women. On May 14, 1796, Jenner took fluid from a cowpox blister and scratched it into the skin of James Phipps, an eight-year-old boy. A blister appeared on the spot, but James soon recovered. On July 1, Jenner inoculated the boy again, this time with smallpox matter, and no disease developed. The vaccine was a success. Doctors all over Europe soon adopted Jenner's technique which led to a major decline in new sufferers of the devastating disease. People all over the globe felt the impact of smallpox. It had a very dangerous and serious impact killing millions.

Because the vaccine originally had to be transferred from arm to arm, its use spread slowly. It was also much less effective in tropical countries, where the heat caused it to quickly deteriorate. Nonetheless, one country after another managed to rid itself of the disease. The last reported U.S. case came in 1949. Spurred by two new technological advances, a heat-stable, freeze-dried vaccine and the bifurcated needle, the World Health Organization then launched a global immunization campaign in 1967 with the goal of wiping out smallpox once and for all. That year, there were 10 million to 15 million cases of smallpox and 2 million deaths, according to estimates. Yet just a decade later, the number was down to zero. No one has naturally contracted the virus since a Somali hospital worker in 1977 (although a laboratory accident in England did kill someone in 1978).

After searching for any remaining trace of smallpox, the WHO's member states passed a resolution on May 8, 1980, declaring it eradicated. Today, guarded laboratories in Atlanta and Moscow hold the only known stores of the virus. Some experts say these should be destroyed, whereas others believe they should be kept around for research purposes just in case smallpox somehow reemerges.