

# Module 3: What About Smallpox – Lesson 1

## Confident Parents – Intelligent Leaders – Articulate Activists

### Key points:

1. Smallpox was a 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century “filth disease”
  - a. Smallpox, cholera, plague, yellow fever, typhus, typhoid and others are a group of infections known as ‘filth diseases.’ All decreased by improving hygiene and sanitary living conditions.
2. Variola minor was the most common form of smallpox. The death rate was less than 1% (<1%)
3. Smallpox doesn’t aerosolize due to the size of the virus, and perhaps because the vector was a bug bite, not person-to-person transmission.
4. Vaccination was filthy, dangerous and spread both syphilis and leprosy. Refer back to Prezi 3 for details about Compulsory Smallpox vaccination, beginning in 1853
5. The last case of smallpox in the US: 1949
6. Smallpox vaccination was stopped in the US to the public: 1972

### What we’re told: "The eradication of smallpox is proof that vaccination programs can be successful."

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1. Smallpox was one of many **filth diseases** in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
New York City:  
‘During the year, the City removed of 20,000 dead horses, mules, donkeys and cattle from the streets. The department also removed nearly half a million smaller animals such as pigs, hogs, calves, and sheep...Its meat inspection unit removed 5.6 million pounds of spoiled poultry, fish, pork, and beef and carted 1,946 cubic yards of night soil (human excrement) from backyards and privies of the city’s tenements.’
2. There were two primary types of smallpox
  - a. **Variola minor:**
    1. The most common form of smallpox after 1900
    2. Accounted for more than 90% of cases
    3. The death rate was less than 1% (<1%)
  - b. **Variola major**
    1. Flat type - rare; nearly 100% fatal
    2. Hemorrhagic – more common than flat type; nearly 100% fatal
    3. Modified – outbreak occurring in those who were vaccinated
3. Cardiac complications and deaths from smallpox / smallpox vaccines
  - a. Reference: “Cardiac Adverse Events Following Smallpox Vaccination” United States, 2003” MMWR March 28, 2003/52(12);248-250  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5212a2.htm>
4. Course of infection
  - Rash -> vesicles -> pustules
  - Heals in 2 weeks leaving behind scars, but lifetime immunity
  - The virus had a predilection for the oil glands in the face, most wanted to avoid smallpox for cosmetic and social reasons.
5. Transmission

- Smallpox is a large and heavy virus; it is not readily aerosolized nor does it spread easily through the air

**REFERENCE:** JAMA Vol. 281, No. 22. Jan. 9, 1999.

**REFERENCE:** Smallpox Fact Sheet.

<https://biotech.law.lsu.edu/blaw/bt/smallpox/CDC/overview.pdf>

#### 6. 1946: Were bedbugs the real vector?

- Dr. Charles Campbell of San Antonio discovered that smallpox appeared to be spread by *Cimex lectularius*, the common bed bug.
- In a paper presented to the Bexar Medical Society, he declared that vaccination does not prevent smallpox. He stated that the disease is “neither infectious nor contagious,” and that the carrier was the common bedbug.
- After years of experimentation and thousands of observations, Dr. Campbell concluded: “Smallpox is transmitted only by the bite of an infected bedbug.
- **The severity of the illness was proportional to the degree of malnutrition of the infected person.**
- Dr. Campbell applied for a \$12,000 research grant in 1947, but was denied.
- By the time the facts about bedbugs were presented, vaccines were mandatory for schools, employment and the military.
- No one was interested in investigating this further...
  - **REFERENCE: BACTERIA, Inc. – available at the Module 1 MVI doc box**

7. Was the story of the US Army intentionally killing Native American Indians with smallpox infested blankets “fake history”?

8. The last reported case of smallpox in the US was in Texas, 1949

9. What was the cause of death from ‘ordinary’ smallpox? The CDC said, “**The Cause of death was Uncertain**”

#### 10. Short History of the Smallpox vaccine

- **1796:** Jenner claimed that inoculation of cowpox virus provided protection against smallpox infection
- **1791:** Jenner vaccinates his 18 month old son with cowpox
- **1801:** British government gives Jenner £10,000 for his experimentation with small pox. That same year, widespread use of the vaccine began.
- **1822:** Jenner given another £20,000 for experimentation with small pox.

#### 11. Jenner’s Vaccination

- Jenner’s vaccination procedure was invasive, unsanitary and disfiguring
- Public inoculators cut at least 4 lines in the arm of the adult, usually the mother of an infant, with an unsterile blade
- Lymph extracted from the underbelly of a cow or from the hoof of a horse, called “grease, “ and smeared into the wound
- Eight days later, the pus formed on the arm of the mother was scraped off and inserted directly into the arm of their child

#### 11. Physicians and Vaccination

- **1840s:** Physicians embraced vaccination & its money immediately
- **1853:** The first of five Compulsory Vaccination Acts passed in England.
- **1872:** The Privy Council was convened to examine the Vaccination Acts. It was discovered that 97.5% of people who died from smallpox had been vaccinated. Reports were suppressed that indicated vaccines were causing more deaths than saving lives.

- **Between 1867 and 1871:** mortality from small pox increased by 275%. The spike was caused by compulsory vaccination
- Undeterred, smallpox vaccination continued for another 100 years.
- “Smallpox inoculation was not derived from scientific experimentation but from a superstition practiced by the common people in India since the 6<sup>th</sup> Century. The fad having once become the fashion, the doctors adopted it as a fetish, which must not be questioned. Once the people realized it was **a curse not a blessing**, they revolted against it. However, the doctors continued in vigorous defense of the superstition as they were obtaining a large revenue from the practice. ...The fee-hunting doctors were incessantly hounding the legislatures **for more stringent compulsory laws** so they could inflict and repeat this degrading practice to increase their revenues.”
  - **REFERENCE:** Vaccination A Curse and a Menace to Personal Liberty, by J.M.Peebles, MD, PhD. **1900** – **Available in the Module 1 Doc Box.**

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