



First U.S. Cowpox Infection: Acquired From Lab Contamination

by Sara Reardon on 17 February 2011, 12:59 PM | [Permanent Link](#) | [4 Comments](#)
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A student laboratory worker at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, is the first person in the United States to come down with cowpox, a less dangerous relative of smallpox, and the culprit is lab contamination. Researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [reported](#) last week at the International Meeting on Emerging Diseases and Surveillance in Vienna that the unvaccinated patient was infected by a genetically modified cowpox virus strain in her research lab, one she had never even worked with, by inadvertently handling contaminated materials.

Cowpox exists in the wild in Europe and Asia, where it is carried by rats and other animals and is often reported in veterinarians and zoo workers, but isn't found in the United States except in research labs. It can severely affect immunocompromised patients, but is not normally lethal. CDC still recommends smallpox vaccination for all lab workers who come in contact with intact orthopoxviruses, a category that includes vaccinia, cowpox, and other animal viruses. The cowpox patient had declined vaccination since she had no intention of handling the virus, and the lab hadn't worked on cowpox for 5 years previous to the incident.

However, CDC investigators found cowpox DNA in many locations around the lab and in stocks of purportedly harmless virus, although no live poxvirus was found on surfaces. The student said she didn't recall an injury or needle stick prior to developing a painful lesion on her finger in July 2010, so it seemed the infection likely occurred from handling chemicals and contaminated samples. In October, a biopsy was sent to CDC, which worked with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to identify the disease as cowpox caused by one of the modified virus strains stored in the lab's freezer.

Mary Reynolds, an epidemiologist in the CDC's Division of High-Consequence Pathogens and Pathology who worked on the study, said that CDC and IDPH have made safety recommendations to the University

of Illinois's biological safety department that are now under consideration. University spokesperson Robin Kaler said that while the investigation showed that the lab had been following established campus policy for storing hazardous materials, the campus is now taking steps to ensure that all people in a lab with such materials are aware of safety procedures. The laboratory personnel worked with investigators to track the course of the infection and concluded that no data from the contaminated samples had been published.

Gigi Kwik Gronvall of the Center for Biosecurity of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland, calls the incident "one more example of many examples that speaks to the need for more vigilance" in lab practices. Infections from labs, she says, could be far more common than reported, partly because labs don't want the blame and partly because in the absence of a needle stick, patients have trouble pinning down why they are sick. Identifying the cause may be particularly difficult in the case of infection by recombinant organisms, which must be reported to the National Institutes of Health and CDC. A patient's symptoms may be different than those caused by a wild organism. Fortunately in this case the distinct pustule formed by cowpox was telling.

"We're becoming quite interested in the concept of people inadvertently being infected with recombinant organisms, not necessarily because of a high safety risk but because of the challenge it provides to state health departments in confirming diagnosis," says Reynolds. Genetic modification of viruses can confound the usual DNA sequencing methods used to identify the virus and make it even more difficult to track down the source. Reynolds says that CDC investigators are beginning to work with the National Institutes of Health Office of Biotechnology Activities and state public health agencies to discuss better ways to diagnose such infections.

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Admin



★ Strend

My belief is that is already too late.

The biotech products; which includes "mutants" and the use of "recombinant techniques" have been on the market now for YEARS. Not only in the United States, but all over the world.

How do you get these microorganisms out of the soil once they are there? I don't think you can.

The problem; and yes I'll say it, is the United States has been shoving these biopesticides, bioinsecticides, biofungicides etc. down the rest of the worlds throats. There is NO way the U.S. wants the truth to come out.

Look who is on Obama's staff (so to speak); the very people who started this mess in the first place... and yes, most of them are or were with Monsanto.

Tom Vilsack; the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and Islam A. Siddiqui is the Chief Agricultural Negotiator in the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR). Prior to this, Siddiqui was Vice President for Science and Regulatory Affairs at CropLife America, a biotechnology industry consortium.

You know what scares the hell out of me? Remember the films MadMax? Well, that is just what it is going to be like.... there will be no vegetation what-so-ever.

Have you EVER heard of SO MANY different cancers, new diseases & old diseases, that were once eradication and now are back?... And let's not forget that we can't eat the food anymore. These biotech products also enter into the water supply. But, what they are doing now is saying that people are flushing their medications down the toilet and that is what is causing the water problems. Unbelievable!

Every one of the crops that have shown positive for Salmonella and E coli have had biotech products used on them.

Remember the melamine scare in the cows milk? This too can be directly linked to bio-control products. The capsules that 'encapsulate' these bio-control products have been using melamine in the production of the capsules that encapsulate the LIVING fungus, bacteria, virus) for long term pest control in biopesticides, biofungicides, bioinsecticides etc. for a long time. I refer you to only one patent which reveals this; United States Patent 6506397; (Microcapsule according to claim 21, wherein said capsule shell is formed by condensation of formaldehyde with at least one of urea and MELAMINE.)

I have contacted government agencies and the news media and no one seems to care. I don't know what to do Diana. My warnings fall of deaf ears. I STRONGLY suspect that the powers to be in the government agencies and the news media have stock in the biotech companies and this is why; as the saying goes... Hear no evil, Speak no evil and See no evil.

Saturday, March 05, 2011, 3:02:06 AM
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★ diana

To Strend

Yes, I just checked USPTO mutants, and I am shocked! What can we do? Any suggestions?
Or is it too late?

Monday, February 28, 2011, 5:13:05 PM
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★ Strend

*IS THE WORLD BEING LED TO BELIEVE THAT ONLY "NATURAL" (naturally found in the environment) BACTERIA AND/OR FUNGUS IS ONLY BEING USED IN MICROBIAL PRODUCTS; BIOPESTICIDES, BIOINSECTICIDES,

BIOFUNGICIDES ETC. WHICH ARE BEING USED ON OUR FOOD CROPS, ORNAMENTALS AND/OR USED FOR INSECT CONTROL? THIS IS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE...

"MUTANTS" ARE BEING USED THAT THE PUBLIC IS NOT AWARE OF. Are we being led to believe these microbial products are safe??

*It seems that using "mutants" and mutants created using recombinant techniques. doesn't qualify the claim of "naturally found" bacteria and fungus which are claimed as being the "active ingredient" in microbial biocontrol products.

*When searching the United States Patent Office for the search terms of "XXXXXXXXXX" and "mutants" the results were twenty (20) United States patents; that were assigned to "XXXXXXXXXX" alone and furthermore does not take into account International patents. These patents uses the wording; mutants, mutants thereof and/or recombinant techniques. There are many MANY more patents that don't list XXXXXXXXXXXX as the holder of the patent; but XXXXXXXXXXXX scientists were listed as "inventors" on other company patents. (these are not listed below)

*The reader is invited; NO... encouraged to search for themselves on the USPTO website for the search terms of "mutants", "mutants thereof" and/or recombinant and decide for themselves whether we can be 100% certain that only "naturally found in the environment" bacteria and/or fungus is being used on our food crops, ornamentals and/or used for insect control.... OR are mutants being used?

You will be shocked!

Sunday, February 27, 2011, 7:29:50 PM

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★ Diana

So many red flags! Very disturbing report.

From unsupervised student lab worker, GM virus research, uncertain source of infection acquisition, and finally the supposition that infections from labs COULD be far more common than reported!

Until there is sufficient vigilance all such research should be placed on hold.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011, 11:17:20 PM

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