People @ Virology

Biography of Professor Zhang Yihao

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Prof. Zhang was born in Tianjin, 1926, and graduated from Peking University health science center in 1951. He mainly focuses on the vaccina virus and proves its transmission pathway in early 1950s. He also led the research and development of measles vaccine in China, and established the "Beijing 55" as vaccine strain in 1960s.

In collaboration with the Chinese Academy of medical sciences Prof. Zhang perfected the production process of oral polio vaccine and improved the vaccine effectiveness. He led the research and development of other viral vaccines in Beijing Institute of biological products, such as Influenza vaccine and yellow fever vaccine.

1979 WTO invited Prof. Zhang to go to Geneva on behalf of China, as a member of the global eradication of smallpox signature verification committee to verify the global eradication of smallpox book (see fig1).

Award

✧ Member of WHO Expert Committee on Biological Standardization (1987)
✧ Served as the Chief Engineer of China Biological Products Corporation (1990s)
✧ Formulate and Compile the “China Decade Plan for the Biologics “(1991 - 2000)
✧ The editor of the book ‘Infectious Diseases Immunization – EPI’
✧ The editor of the book ‘Handbook of Prevention vaccination’.

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Fig 1 : Prof. Zhang signed in the global commission for certification of smallpox eradication in 1979, Geneva
Note

About the eradication of smallpox

Smallpox was an infectious disease caused by either of two virus variants, Variola major and Variola minor [1], and was believed to have emerged in human populations about 10,000 BC [2]. Smallpox was still appears in 33 countries, with 2 million people died each year in those days, so WHO accepted the Soviet Union’s Proposal in 1958, and expands the global eradication of smallpox in action, and gets worldwide support. The program was under the leadership of an American doctor Donald Henderson in 1967.

At the beginning, Health care workers around the world faced the same problem, that is including smallpox epidemic disease is usually not reported by the medical institutions around the country; some medical institutions do not cooperate or inability to cooperate; some people refuse vaccination for religious reasons and so on. After 11 years hard work, the program has get great achievement. The last patient due to V. Major had been detected in October 1975 in a two-year-old Bangladeshi girl, Rahima Banu; the lasted spontaneous V. Minor in October 26, 1977 in Africa in Somalia. A British medical photographer Janet Parker (Janet Parker) in 1978 contracted smallpox from the laboratory is the world's last patient.

The global eradication of smallpox was certified, based on intense verification activities in countries, by a commission of eminent scientists on 9 December 1979 and subsequently endorsed by the World Health Assembly on 8 May 1980[3]. The first two sentences of the resolution read: "Having considered the development and results of the global program on smallpox eradication initiated by WHO in 1958 and intensified since 1967 ... Declares solemnly that the world and its peoples have won freedom from smallpox, which was a most devastating disease sweeping in epidemic form through many countries since earliest time, leaving death, blindness and disfigurement in its wake and which only a decade ago was rampant in Africa, Asia and South America."

—World Health Organization, Resolution WHA33.3 [4]

Reference


