



How Vaccines Work: The Immunology Underlying Commonly Used Vaccines

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Disclosures

• None





Presentation outline

- Historical perspective: back to the future
- Basic immune mechanisms involved in vaccination
- Commonly used vaccine platforms
- Causes of rare but serious vaccine adverse effects





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Smallpox

- Described in Egypt, India, and China
 >3000 years ago
- Variola major
 - Respiratory tract transmission
 - Flu-like illness followed by dissemination and diffuse pustular rash
 - 30% mortality
- Eradicated in the 1970s after a 20-year WHO-led global vaccination campaign



Last known variola major, 1975



Last known variola minor, 1977





- Variolation of healthy individuals with skin secretions from smallpox patients occurred in China and the Ottoman Empire as early as the 1600s
- Lady Montagu introduced variolation to England in the early 1700s after observing it in the Ottoman Empire
- English farmer Benjamin Jetsy inoculated his wife and sons with bovine cowpox in 1774 during a smallpox epidemic



Lady Montagu

Benjamin Jetsy





Edward Jenner (1749-1823)

- Also aware that milkmaids contracted cowpox but not smallpox
- After inoculating human cowpox into James Phipps in 1796, variolation produced no disease
- The British government outlawed variolation and provided cowpox vaccination free of charge in 1840



Jenner beginning the first controlled human challenge trial with cowpox vaccination, 1796





Vaccinia virus vaccine

 Precise origin unknown due to record keeping in the 1800s, thought to have originated from cowpox



- "Zero generation" vaccine (1800s): Vaccinia inoculated by arm-to-arm transmission
- First generation vaccines (early 1900s): Vaccinia grown on livestock skin (Dryvax)
- Second generation vaccines (1950s): Vaccinia grown in cell culture (ACAM2000)
- Third generation vaccines (1970s): Replication-deficient vaccinia





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The immune system is hierarchical and dispersed throughout the body



Adapted from hematopia.com

Adapted from clevelandclinic.org





Innate and adaptive immunity

Innate immunity Dendritic cell Mast cell Immediate B cell (minutes/hours) Macrophage $\gamma\delta$ T cell response to T cell pathogens Natural killer cell Basophil Cells/receptors Complement similar between protein Antibodies Natural Eosinophil CD4+ T cell CD8+ killer T cel individuals T cell Granulocytes Neutrophil Example: neutrophils

Adaptive immunity

Delayed (days/weeks) response to pathogens

Cells/receptors pathogen- and individual-specific

Example: B cells & T cells





What happens after vaccination?

Step 1 Vaccine antigens are taken up by muscle-resident innate antigen presenting cells (APCs, e.g. *dendritic cells*)







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Step 3 APCs activate adaptive antigen-specific *B cells* and *T cells* in the draining lymph node via their BCRs/TCRs







What about adjuvants?

Adjuvants are substances that are co-formulated with antigens to increase *immunogenicity*

Some adjuvants are recognized by well-described toll-like receptors (TLRs) on innate immune cells

- AS01
 - Shingrix (shingles)
 - RTS,S (malaria)
- CpG
 - Heplisav (hepatitis B)



Adapted from Pulendran et al, Nat Rev Drug Discov. 2021





What about adjuvants?

Other adjuvants are less well understood and likely work through multiple mechanisms (non-TLR)

- Alum
 - HepA, HepB
 - TDaP
 - Hib
 - Pneumococcus (Prevnar)
 - HPV (Gardasil)
 - Meningococcus (Bexsero)
- MF59
 - Influenza

Adjuvant	Known knowns
Alum	Antibody response independent of TLR signalling ⁵²
Aluminium hydroxide Aluminium phosphate	Activation of NLRP3 inflammasome in macrophages and $DCs^{53,54}$
	Activation of DCs is mediated by uric acid ⁵⁹
ist.	Rapid recruitment of neutrophils and formation of NETs ⁶²
TAX -	Induces cell death that releases DNA, which triggers STING–IRF3 activation, necessary for IgE antibody and T _H 2 cell responsed ⁶²
MF59	Activates macrophages and DCs at injection site ⁶⁸
Squalene	Induces chemokine secretion ⁷¹
Tween (polysorbate) 80	Antibody and CD4 ⁺ T cell responses depend on transient release of ATP by muscle cells ⁷³
Span of	TLR-independent MyD88 activation and NLRP3-independent ASC activation 74,75
	Stimulation of antigen-specific CD8 ⁺ T cells in tissues is via RIPK3-dependent pathway ⁷⁴





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Type of vaccine		Licensed vaccines using this technology
Live attenuated (weakened or inactivated)		Measles, mumps, rubella, yellow fever, influenza, oral polio, typhoid, Japanese encephalitis, rotavirus, BCG, varicella zoster
Killed whole organism		Whole-cell pertussis, polio, influenza, Japanese encephalitis, hepatitis A, rabies
Toxoid	$ \begin{array}{c} \bigstar & \bigstar \\ \end{array} $	Diphtheria, tetanus
Subunit (purified protein, recombinant protein, polysaccharide, peptide)	9909	Pertussis, influenza, hepatitis B, meningococcal, pneumococcal, typhoid, hepatitis A
Virus-like particle		Human papillomavirus
Outer Pathoge membrane antigen vesicle	n Gram-negative bacterial outer membrane	Group B meningococcal
Protein-polysaccharide conjugate	Polysaccharide Carrier protein	Haemophilus influenzae type B, pneumococcal, meningococcal, typhoid

Since the live-attenuated vaccinia vaccine was introduced in England in 1840, a multitude of new vaccine platforms have been developed







Live attenuated

Pathogens are attenuated, typically by repeated growth in a laboratory

The most widely used is the combination measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)

Influenza (intranasal): mostly children

Yellow fever, typhoid: travelers

BCG given at birth to >90% of the world

Oral polio vaccine given in other countries





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Killed whole organism

Pathogens are killed/inactivated, typically with chemicals (e.g formaldehyde) or irradiation (ultraviolet or gamma)

Two widely used vaccines:

Influenza: Revised annually based on epidemiological data

Polio: Jonas Salk vaccine from the 1950s

Other common vaccines include hepatitis A and rabies





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<u>Subunit</u>

A pathogen <u>component</u> ("subunit"), usually a *protein* or *polysaccharide*, frequently combined with an adjuvant

The most commonly used vaccines:

Hepatitis A and B Pertussis: TD<u>aP</u> Pneumococcus: Pneumovax Shingles: Shingrix Typhoid: travelers



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Toxoid

Some bacterial diseases are exceptionally dependent on a single bacterial toxin to mediate disease

Vaccines may specifically target these toxins rather than the pathogen

Toxins are inactivated by formaldehyde or genetic modification

Tetanus: <u>T</u>DaP Diphtheria: T<u>D</u>aP



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Protein-polysaccharide conjugate

These vaccines combine features of both **subunit** and **toxoid** platforms

A polysaccharide **subunit** component is linked to a **toxoid** to boost the immune response to the polysaccharide

Commonly used vaccines:

Hemophilus influenza: Hib (tetanus toxoid) Pneumococcus: PCV13/20 (diphtheria tox.) Meningococcus: Menveo (diphtheria tox.)





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Adapted from Pollard and Bijker, Nat Rev Immunol 2021

Virus like-particle

HPV has been difficult to grow in the laboratory, prompting researchers to develop capsid proteins that self-assemble into immunogenic virus-like particles

HPV: Gardasil, Cervarix



Adapted from Mohsen and Bachmann, Cell Mol Immunol 2022



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What about vaccines for COVID-19?







The global COVID-19 vaccine effort drew upon these well-known platforms to rapidly generate a vast number of vaccine candidates

Subunit

- Novavax (US)
- Corbevax*

Whole killed organism

• CoronaVac (China)







Texas scientists' new Covid-19 vaccine is cheaper, easier to make and patent-free



Corbevax

SARS-CoV-2 spike protein formulated with alum and CpG adjuvants

Simple low-cost design similar to hepatitis B vaccines

Distributed to manufacturers without patent protection

>50 million doses given in India as of August 2022

January 15, 2022





How mRNA vaccines work



1. mRNA is packaged into lipid particles that are taken up into cells via endosomes at the site of administration

2. The lipid particle itself exerts an adjuvant effect

3. mRNA escapes the lipid particle and makes protein

4. The protein induces B cell and T cell responses





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Oral polio vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDPV)



Oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV)

Not given in the United States since 2000

Live-attenuated vaccine that infects the gastrointestinal tract akin to poliovirus

Simple administration more suitable for mass vaccination *and* more immunogenic

Very rarely OPV may mutate to a poliovirus-like state (VDPV) that can further circulate in an *under-vaccinated population* and cause polio

https://www.unicef.org/immunization/polio





Oral polio vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDPV)

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

Public Health Response to a Case of Paralytic Poliomyelitis in an Unvaccinated Person and Detection of Poliovirus in Wastewater — New York, June–August 2022

Ruth Link-Gelles, PhD¹; Emily Lutterloh, MD^{2,3}; Patricia Schnabel Ruppert, DO⁴; P. Bryon Backenson, MS^{2,3}; Kirsten St. George, PhD^{5,6}; Eli S. Rosenberg, PhD^{2,3}; Bridget J. Anderson, PhD²; Meghan Fuschino, MS⁵; Michael Popowich⁵; Chitra Punjabi, MD⁴; Maria Souto, MPH⁴; Kevin McKay, MPH⁴; Samuel Rulli⁴; Tabassum Insaf, PhD²; Dustin Hill, PhD⁷; Jessica Kumar, DO²; Irina Gelman, DPM⁸; Jaume Jorba, PhD¹; Terry Fei Fan Ng, PhD¹; Nancy Gerloff, PhD¹; Nina B. Masters, PhD¹; Adriana Lopez, MHS¹; Kathleen Dooling, MD¹; Shannon Stokley, DrPH¹; Sarah Kidd, MD¹; M. Steven Oberste, PhD¹; Janell Routh, MD¹; 2022 U.S. Poliovirus Response Team



Adapted from Link-Gelles et al Am J Transplant. 2022

Two cases of VDPV-associated polio have been described in the United States since eradication of wild-type virus in 1979

2005: After index case (infant), VDPV discovered circulating in an under-vaccinated community in Minnesota

2022: After index case (young adult), VDPV discovered circulating in an under-vaccinated community in Rockland County, New York



Vaccine-induced thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT)



Viral-vectored vaccines

Similar to subunit vaccines, a pathogen <u>component</u> is delivered using an replication incompetent virus, usually an adenovirus

Approved viral-vectored vaccines:

Ebola

COVID-19

- J&J: Ad26.COV2.S
- Oxford: ChAdOx1 nCoV-19
- Sputnik V: Gam-COVID-Vac



Vaccine-induced thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT)



Adapted from Klok et al Lancet 2022

Proposed VITT mechanism

1. Adenovirus vector find directly to circulating PF4, a protein thought to be involved in innate immunity

Virology and Vaccine Research

2. The adenovirus-PF4 complex stimulates the production of anti-PF4 autoantibodies

3. Anti-PF4 autoantibodies bind to multiple cell types causing a consumptive coagulopathy similar to heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT)



Vaccine-induced thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT)



Adapted from Klok et al Lancet 2022

J&J vaccine (United States estimates)

- Doses given: >15 million
- Lives saved: >50,000
- VITT mortality rate: 0.6 per million
- VITT deaths: 8

Oxford vaccine (global estimates)

- Doses given: >2 billion
- Lives saved: >6 million
- VITT mortality rate: 1 per million

Virology and Vaccine Research





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Conclusions

- Variolation has a long history and the first modern vaccination campaign began with cowpox in 1840
- The immune system contains many cell types that can be roughly classified as innate or adaptive
- Innate immune cells carry antigens to draining lymph nodes where adaptive B cells and T cells become activated
- Adjuvants increase the intensity of the immune response
- Five major vaccine platforms account for the great majority commonly used vaccines
- Vaccine adverse effects are well-described but are very rare and vastly outweighed by vaccine benefits





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Questions and contact

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