

Smallpox: not a small problem

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Smallpox is a contagious disease that at one time was very common and deadly.

It was a huge problem that wiped out many communities and areas. While there is no clear origin of the disease, smallpox appears to date back to ten thousand years ago, around the Egyptian Empire. Smallpox-like rashes found on mummies indicate that the disease was prevalent during this era. The first written description of smallpox was documented in the fourth century CE in China. Ten thousand years ago, farmers started living among the animals in certain countries. Animals, such as cows and camels, can carry many diseases, including cow pox and camel pox.

These poxes are very similar to those of smallpox. The disease did not come from animals. Though it was contracted by humans in a form similar to the animal strains, the exact origin of the disease is still unknown. Because animals carry diseases like smallpox, there is definitely a direct link between animal poxes and smallpox. The variola virus, or smallpox, is only dangerous and deadly to humans. Animals are not at risk of getting smallpox.

In order to fully understand smallpox, one must look at the causes, symptoms, and treatment of the disease.