

The WHO Collaborating Center for Smallpox and other Poxviruses at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Atlanta, GA: 2006 report on the variola collection

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The World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Center for Poxviruses in Atlanta, GA continues to maintain one of two consolidated, international collections of variola strains. The majority of these viruses were originally isolated on embryonated eggs and characterized during the final years of the intensification of the smallpox eradication campaign. The virus collection is maintained in two separate freezers, one of which is a back-up freezer which has remained largely untouched. Secure databases, which address WHO recommendations as well as U.S. Select Agent requirements have been implemented to track usage of variola virus. Annual reports on the status of these collections are provided to the WHO. Research has also focused on further characterization of plaque morphologies and growth characteristics of the variola viruses from diverse geographic areas and diverse years of isolation. This work will permit basic biologic characterizations of viral stocks which are utilized in essential public-health research related to diagnostic, vaccine and therapeutic development. .