Foreword

Edward Jenner, MD, FRS (1749–1823)
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On May 14, 1796, Edward Jenner, a country doctor in Gloucestershire, England, inoculated a boy named James Phipps with matter from a cowpox lesion on the finger of a dairymaid called Sarah Nelmes with the intention of protecting him against smallpox; a local lesion developed at the site of inoculation. On July 1, 1796, he inoculated James again, this time with matter from a lesion from a patient suffering from smallpox; the inoculation was unsuccessful, and the boy remained well.

So began the practice of vaccination that eventually resulted in eradication of smallpox from the world in 1977. At the International Society for Infectious Diseases Congress in Hong Kong, we celebrated the 200th anniversary of this momentous achievement with the Jenner Symposium on vaccines.

Edward Jenner was a polymath, learned in botany and ornithology as well as medicine. He assisted in the classification of botanical specimens brought back from the Pacific by Captain Cook, the discoverer of Australia, and was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal Society (FRS), probably the highest scientific accolade in the world at that time, for his studies on birds, especially the cuckoo, not for his medical achievements. These, however, were recognized by the award of honorary degrees from a number of universities and a pension for life from Parliament.

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