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etymologia

Mycobacterium bovis [mī'ko-bak-tēr-eəm bō'-vis]

From the Latin bos (“ox” or “cow”) *Mycobacterium bovis* is a virulent bacterial species originally isolated from tubercles in cattle. Robert Koch, who discovered the tubercle bacillus in 1882, believed that *M. bovis* was not a danger to humans. Theobald Smith and others established beyond doubt that, contrary to Koch’s belief, *M. bovis* could infect humans but was not the usual source of human infection. In 1908, French scientists

Albert Calmette and Camille Guérin chose an *M. bovis* strain for their work on a tuberculosis vaccine. They repeatedly subcultured the isolate on a mixture of glycerol, potato, and bile for 13 years until it was sufficiently attenuated to be used as a vaccine. The bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine was adopted by the League of Nations as the standard tuberculosis vaccine in 1928 and continues to be used in most developing countries.

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