

Yellow Fever Fever

Doctor Stubbins Ffirth observed that yellow fever was prominent during the summer, but receded as winter approached and made the mistaken conclusion that this meant the disease was not contagious. The fact that he never caught the disease after constant exposure to patients with the malady further inspired him. In order to prove the disease was non-contagious, Ffirth decided he needed to expose himself to all types of bodily fluids

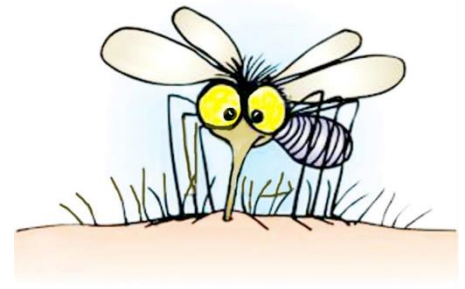
secreted by yellow fever victims. He drank the vomit of the victims, he injected it into his veins, he dripped it into his eyes and he inhaled the fumes from the vomit. Through it all, he never did manage to contract the disease. Rather than admitting that he made his point or moving on to testing on other people, Ffirth realized there were far more body fluids for him to experiment with. He used blood, urine, saliva and perspiration. Even after all of these tests, he still managed to resist the disease.



Unfortunately, Ffirth failed to take into account the different stages of the disease. His samples all came from persons who were in the late stages of the malady, and were, thus, no longer contagious. Had he experimented with samples from people who only recently contracted the disease, his results likely would have been a whole lot different. As for the observation that the disease disappeared during the winter months? He was right about that, just wrong about the cause. Yellow fever is caused by a RNA virus that is spread by mosquitoes. That's why it was so much more common during the humid summers on the East Coast. Fortunately, before word of Ffirth's research spread, locals believed the disease was spreading through the waterways and Philadelphia introduced a closed water system that helped eliminate cisterns and barrels full of water that served as mosquito breeding grounds during the summer.

Scientific Method Application

Set up Dr. Ffirth's experiment



1. What was his observation?

2. What was his hypothesis?

3. How did he test his hypothesis? (i.e. what was his experiment)

4. What his hypothesis proven? Why or why not?

5. What were at least 2 mistakes Dr. Ffirth made in his experiment?

6. *Explain in at least 5-6 sentences how you would set up the experiment differently. Make sure to include a hypothesis.*
