

Why not destroy all small pox samples? Threat of synthetic recreation one reason

When the world eradicated smallpox in 1980, it was the first — and still only — time that people have been able to completely wipe out a human disease.

Ever since then, scientists and health experts have been debating whether to destroy the last remaining lab samples of the smallpox virus — and eliminate the (small) risk of the virus ever escaping. The international community will be deciding on this issue later this week at the annual World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization.

The case for destroying smallpox is simple enough: what if the virus escapes out of the lab (or is smuggled out)? That could possibly be a disaster — especially since half of the world has never been vaccinated for smallpox. Smallpox kills about a third of the people it infects. It's serious business.

Read the full, original story: [Why we'll never destroy the last samples of smallpox](#)