Lockjaw Occurring after Attending a Small Kitchen Garden

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A 47-year-old man developed a small chafe on his foot while tending to his kitchen garden. After four days, he visited the hospital with dysphagia and jaw spasms. His condition was clinically diagnosed as tetanus. He recovered following the administration of penicillin G, tetanus toxoid and tetanus immunoglobulin (TIG). The tetanus toxin was found in his serum, and an anaerobic culture of a small scab (Picture 1) revealed *Clostridium tetani* (Picture 2). Experimental findings have shown the injection of the culture supernatant derived from this strain to cause death in mice. As in this case, the tetanus booster is not commonly administered to adults in Japan. Moreover, tetanus toxoid became commercially available as a voluntary inoculation in 1952 and as a routine vaccination in 1968, and the DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) vaccine was once discontinued between 1975 and 1981 in Japan. Furthermore, outdoor activities and gardening have become common for every generation. Therefore, many adults with an inadequate vaccination history are at a higher risk of contracting tetanus (1).

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Reference

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