Conclusions

Pneumococcal vaccination appears to be a safe, cheap, effective vaccination to protect certain high-risk groups against invasive pneumococcal disease. It is under-utilised in the UK and an increased awareness programme among healthcare workers and patients is required.

The UK guidelines, like the US guidelines, should include all patients above 65 years of age.⁹ Further evaluation of vaccination is needed in the severely immunocompromised.⁶

The new conjugate vaccines which preliminary studies have shown to be safe, efficacious, and more immunogenic, and which can be offered to children under two years, are eagerly awaited for general use.

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Medical Anniversary

WILLIAM H WELCH, 8 APRIL 1850

William Henry Welch (1850–1934) was born in Norfolk, Connecticut, USA, son of a large medical family (his father, grandfather and four uncles were doctors). He studied at Yale before joining the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York, for his medical degree (1875). A medical school prize of a microscope, an uncommon instrument for those days, surely helped to shape his future as a pathologist and bacteriologist. He was Professor of Pathology at Bellevue Hospital (1879–84), until he was invited to take the Chair of Pathology at the Johns Hopkins Hospital; and in 1893 became first Dean of the medical school. His name is attached to *Bacillus* or *Clostridium welchii*, isolated from a syphilitic bricklayer with subcutaneous 'emphysema', which was, of course, gas gangrene.

He was known affectionately as Popsy and as the Dean of all American medicine. He was a short and portly bachelor with a white moustache, Van Dyck beard, twinkling eyes; a lover of cigars and good wine, he was a supporter of both opera and of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team.

— DG James

Commemorative window from the 'Human Endeavor' series in Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, USA