

Biological and Chemical Terrorism: A Pharmacy Preparedness Guide

Krenzelok EP. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, Bethesda, Maryland, 2003. Soft cover, 232 pages, ISBN 1-58528-048-8, US\$50.00.

The anthrax attacks of 2001 in the United States did not signal the beginning of a new era, but they did bring biological warfare to the forefront by hitting close to home. Biological warfare has a long history. Almost as soon as humans figured out how to make arrows, they were dipping these weapons in animal feces to enhance their lethality. From the Spanish conquistadors who gave clothing contaminated with smallpox virus to South American natives, to the members of a religious commune who contaminated salad bars in Oregon with *Salmonella enteritides*, humans have used biological agents in a variety of warfare and terrorist settings.

Not so long ago a nuclear attack by a foreign power was the main concern. The focus has now shifted from a single large-scale assault to a series of smaller attacks that could be just as damaging to the economy and public morale. The intent of terrorism is to terrorize. If the target population doesn't know what's coming next or whether the attacks are over, the terrorist's goal has been achieved.

Biological and Chemical Terrorism: A Pharmacy Preparedness Guide is intended to guide the pharmacy manager in developing and implementing a preparedness centre for chemical or biological terrorism. Although this text is US-based, its key information and recommendations can easily be put to use in Canada.

The text features well-organized sections dedicated to biological terrorism agents, chemical terrorism agents, hospital pharmacy preparedness, and a comprehensive list of resources. Each of the sections includes a variety of fundamental, previously published references presented as readings. The readings have been written by panels of subject matter experts, many of whom have military backgrounds. Each section's readings are preceded by a short, well-written introduction to the topic.

As health care professionals, pharmacists play a key role in the development and maintenance of emergency preparedness plans, particularly chemical and biological response plans. The section on hospital pharmacy preparedness is well thought out and brings out many important points, and the corresponding readings complement this section nicely.

The strength of this text lies in its organization and comprehensiveness. Its weakness lies in the fact that the readings have all been published previously and can, with some effort, be obtained from their respective sources.

This text would be a very useful resource for educating pharmacy staff and for establishing or reviewing a pharmacy preparedness plan. *Biological and Chemical Terrorism: A Pharmacy Preparedness Guide* is a good "one-stop-shopping" reference.

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