Preparing Hospitals for Bioterror
Preparing Hospitals for Bioterror: A Medical and Biomedical Systems Approach

Edited by

Joseph H. McIsaac, III
This book is dedicated to
Randi, Ellen, Lauren, and Katie
“Chance favors the prepared mind.”—Louis Pasteur
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Preface

This text is intended to be a guide to those interested in improving the readiness of their hospital or healthcare organization to manage mass casualties resulting from a bioterror incident. It is intended to appeal to three diverse groups: clinicians, administrators, and support personnel. Rather than focus exclusively on the medical treatment of patients exposed to weapons of mass destruction, we have tried to take a more holistic approach. A hospital is a living, breathing entity, much the same as the human body. All parts are interdependent and must function in a tightly coordinated manner to survive and prosper. We have tried to present this organism from a multiple of perspectives, each representing a functional unit of the larger system. The authors are as diverse as the material. They range from nationally recognized authorities to those whose expertise is derived from years of practical experience. Each has a unique orientation that, when added to the whole, gives a result greater than sum of the parts. This book is an attempt to present as many of these views as possible, from individual patient treatment to facilities management, and from simulation to practical advice from a hospital that successfully managed a SARS outbreak.

While the overall theme of the book is response to bioterrorism, the principles and techniques discussed clearly are applicable to all disasters, both large and small. The fundamental message is that preparation, communications, and cooperation, on all scales, will determine the institution’s success or failure in managing a mass casualty incident.

In medicine, an expert is an individual who has treated a large number of patients with a particular disease over an extended length of time, and who has published scholarly works on the subject. Thankfully, there are few who meet these criteria in the field of bioterrorism, at this time. Few authors here will represent themselves as true experts, yet each has expertise, often in translation from a related field, which can be of benefit to us all.

Unfortunately, the world is changing rapidly. We cannot continue to sit by unprepared for what many believe is the inevitable proliferation and implementation of these weapons. It is my sincere hope that this book continues to be more theory than reality.
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