Spores, Plagues, and History: The Story of Anthrax, by Dr. Chris Holmes is now available.

A book about the history of anthrax for the general reader is here. Anthrax can be manufactured in a bathtub. Just because we haven't found anthrax in Iraq does not in any way mean anthrax won't be used in future warfare. Of the fourteen diseases that have transferred from animal to humans, nine have been used in warfare. The more the public knows about the history of anthrax the calmer they will be when it is used for warfare again, 'if' no longer being an option.

(PRWEB) November 6, 2003 --HISTORY OF ANTHRAX NOW AVAILABLE
DR. CHRIS HOLMES AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS
760.630.4585

SPORES, PLAGUES, AND HISTORY: THE STORY OF ANTHRAX
Chris Holmes, M.D., M.S.P.H. / Escondido, California
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This book is much more than the story of a microbe. It is the tale of a disease which has been both a part of, and a maker of, human history from biblical times to the present.

The opening three chapters review the anthrax cases of October-November, 2001 and the status of the hunt for the terrorist, and briefly describe the signs and symptoms of the disease. Next, chapters on the Ten Plagues of ancient Egypt, the Plague of Athens in 430 B.C., and the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. make the case that anthrax was the principal culprit in those history-altering calamities. Equally startling is the argument that the medieval epidemic known as the Black Death, usually ascribed to bubonic plague, was mostly due to anthrax as well.

Chapters on Robert Koch, who discovered bacillus anthracis, Louis Pasteur, who created a vaccine against it, and Woollsorter's disease, the first anthrax epidemic to be systematically studied with the new discipline of epidemiology, bring the story to the end of anthrax as a naturally-occurring disease and begin its tale as a biological weapon.

It is unimaginable that any rational society would intentionally unleash a disease like this. But starting with the Japanese in World War II, that is exactly what happened. And not only were these new bioweapons produced in mass quantities, they were engineered to be resistant to antibiotics, more virulent, and more easily disseminated.

The last third of the book describes the Cold War biological weapon programs of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. When the U.S. finally dismantled its program in 1972 -- to comply with the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention -- the Soviets saw this as a golden opportunity. Under the innocuous sounding name of their program, Biopreparat, they perfected the industrialization and weaponization of anthrax, plague, botulinum toxin, smallpox and other agents. But they paid a price for it; the outbreak of an epidemic of inhalation anthrax in the Siberian town of Sverdlovsk in 1972. A chapter is devoted to this 'Biological Chernobyl.'
Another chapter describes how Saddam Hussein's bioweapons program began as an international effort, with seed cultures from the U.S. and equipment and supplies from Russia and Europe. Iraq's arsenal -- documented by the UNSCOM inspections of 1991, 1996 and 1998 -- is described in detail.

Are we facing a biological Armageddon? No, it is not hopeless. The final chapter describes recent efforts to prepare for a future biological attack. CDC, in particular, has provided training for medical personnel to recognize bioweapon diseases, for labs to diagnose these diseases faster, for better communications among public health agencies, and for stockpiles of vaccines and antibiotics. Realistic drills testing the new preparedness are marginally reassuring. And the same technology used to create these weapons is being used to provide new ways to defeat them through better vaccines and improved antibiotics.

Though intended for the general, interested reader rather than the scholar, this book was carefully researched. Ten pages of references list some of the chief sources, and sixteen illustrations highlight important features of the story. The 'Foreword,' by a distinguished, practicing epidemiologist, gives the larger view of the work: it is 'a tale of history and prophecy woven into a fabric of what was, what might have been and what might yet be.'

ANTHRAX! SMALLPOX! PLAGUE! Until recently, most Americans were unfamiliar with these terms or assumed they were a part of history. The October, 2001 anthrax cases catapulted this condition into the headlines and the minds of many. What are the agents and the illnesses they cause? How worried should we be and what can we do to protect ourselves? With new infectious diseases emerging and old ones resurfacing, the challenge of early detection, containment and prevention is urgent.

Dr. Chris Holmes has written a provocative, engrossing book that offers the general reader the answers to these questions. 'Spores, Plagues and History' follows the trail of anthrax from prebiblical times to the present. The reader gains an appreciation for the challenge early investigators faced in responding to clusters of illness when the cause was not known. 'Spores, Plagues and History' also provides a highly readable, authoritative perspective of the role other infectious agents have played in world history.

Michele Ginsberg, Chief of Community Epidemiology
HHSA, San Diego County, California

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http://www.durbanhouse.com

A native of Canada, Chris Holmes received his M.D. from the University of Cincinnati's College of Medicine and served in the Air Force during Vietnam. After stints in private practice and academia, he became a Navy physician and has studied extensively nuclear, biological and chemical warfare. He led the medical team aboard the USS Tripoli during the 1992 U.S. intervention in Somalia.

Captain Holmes, MC, USN (Ret.) has been studying the history of medicine for over 35 years. He is the author of two books dealing with Anthrax. He is a physician, epidemiologist, an authority on disease and bio-warfare.
past and present, and is arguably the world's leading authority on the history of anthrax. Dr. Holmes has taught at medical schools, has published many scholarly articles, and is certified in submarine and diving medicine with the U.S. Navy, just to survey some of his extraordinary experience.

His Op-EdÂ’s have appeared in newspapers from San Diego to Tennessee, and he has been interviewed on radio talk-shows from San Francisco to Boston. Dr. Holmes has also appeared on Fox News with Mr. John Gibson, being interviewed about monkeypox and infectious diseases and on XETV in San Diego, being interviewed on Fox in the Morning about anthrax and bioterrorism.

PRESENTATIONS


3. Holmes, C: "Toward the Measurement of Primary Care", presented to the Biannual Meeting of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, San Diego, California, May 1978.


8. Holmes, C and Capello, C: 'Smoking, Smoking-Related Diseases, and Stop-Smoking Methods.' One-day conference held at Naval Regional Medical Center, San Diego, California, October 20, 1981. Conference Co-chairman.

9. Holmes, C: 'Getting a Program in Biomedical Ethics Stated in a School of Public Health.' American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada, October 14-18, 1982.


12. Holmes, C: NiOSH-approved spirometry instructor for spirometry course


HOLLYWHITE & ASSOCIATES
760.630.4585 - P
760.726.2595 - F
marcusantonius1@cox.net
Contact Information
Holly White
HOLLY WHITE & ASSOCIATES
http://www.DurbanHouse.com
760.630.4585

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