

INFECTIOUS DISEASES (BACTERIAL, FUNGAL, VIRAL, PARASITIC, INFESTATIONS)

BIOTERRORISM : A DERMATOLOGISTS PERSPECTIVE - AN AID TO EARLY DETECTION

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Introduction: The word bioterrorism has been defined as the intentional release of viruses, bacteria, toxins or other harmful agents to cause illness or death in people, animals, or plants. Newer strains of viruses and recent outbreak of Zika virus, Ebola virus, H1N1 raise a lot of questions on our preparedness to handle them as a bio weapon attack. The use of biological agents have always been a threat in biological warfare, but its use as a bio terror weapon have a lot of unexplored implications.

Ideal Bioterrorism weapon have these characteristics

1. Easy Inexpensive access
2. Easily disseminable
3. Ability to create fear and panic
4. Irresponsive to conventional therapy
5. Easy storage

Most of the conditions have muco-cutaneous manifestations and their knowledge can aid in early detection even if lab facilities may not be available. Immediate therapy and initiation of early supportive care provides an only chance for survival from these potentially lethal infections.

Few conditions which have a Dermatological manifestations are mentioned below

S No Bio weapon Dermatological manifestation

1. Anthrax Pruritic macule, Papule, Ulcer, necrotic eschar
2. Plague Petechiae, Purpura, ecchymosis, acral cyanosis, Ecthyma gangrenosum like lesions, Carbuncles
3. Small Pox Progression of Macules, papules, Vesicle, pustules, ulcers.
4. Tularemia Cutaneous ulcer, Lymphadenopathy
5. Viral hemorrhagic fevers Flushing, purpura, ecchymosis
6. Ebola virus Maculo popular rash on trunk
7. H1 N1 virus Vasculitis, Purpura.

Conclusion: With the ever changing terrorist's strategy to create fear and panic in the world, bio weapons are clearly an underestimated mode of mass destruction. Just a little knowledge of muco-cutaneous manifestations and an index of suspicion can aid to early diagnosis.