

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
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**BIOTERRORISM (BIOLOGICAL WARFARE SCARE:
UNDERSTANDING WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IS NOT)**

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Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the USA, Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director General of the World Health Organization issued the following statements:

“We must prepare for the possibility that people are deliberately harmed with biological or chemical agents, and that any deliberate use of agents such as anthrax or smallpox should be contained by an effective public health response.”

The first step towards the so-called “preparedness” is understanding what this “Biological Warfare” is all about, how the threat relates to many other infectious diseases that have the great potential to spread internationally and quickly. This paper focuses on the frequently asked questions or FAQs that the World Health Organization and the Center for Communicable Disease Control try to address. These FAQs are the following:

1. Which agents are most likely to be used to create a deliberate outbreak?
2. How are these agents applied to create a deliberate outbreak?
3. How would governments find out that an attack had taken place?
4. What kind of monitoring system is in place for infectious disease outbreaks?

The tasks of the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network will be explained.

5. What treatment is available?
6. Would mass vaccination be an option in the case of a disease outbreak?
7. Should people be vaccinated now as a prevention?
8. What should national governments be doing now?

Three of the biological agents most likely to be used as biological weapons will be discussed. These are anthrax, small pox and bubonic plague.

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