

**Biological, Chemical and Nuclear Terrorism.** Cham E. Dallas, Director, Interdisciplinary Toxicology Program, University Of Georgia, Athens, GA

The threat posed by the terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) within the United States has grown significantly in recent years. The consequences of a large scale event using one of these weapons may involve hundreds of thousands or millions of casualties, which would enormously strain our medical emergency response capabilities. The decline of the symmetric threat of an opposing superpower, where the likelihood of WMD use was relatively low, has now been replaced by the much higher likelihood of multiple asymmetric threats such as small but ruthless terrorist organization or rogue states. The historical use of WMD provides a glimpse of the great logistical difficulties in responding to a large-scale WMD domestic event today. Recent biological and chemical weapons use by the AUM Shinrikyo cult and by Iraq illustrate the current asymmetric WMD threat possibilities. The potential scenarios for the large-scale domestic use of WMD are explained simultaneously with brief CD video segments which dramatically illustrate the ease with which such weapons can be employed and the magnitude of response that will be required in a large-scale event. The particular danger to medical response personnel is highlighted, along with data illustrating how potentially high attrition rates might be expected for emergency room physicians, nurses, and medical transport personnel. Vigorous, creative, and accelerated training and coordination among the federal agencies tasked for WMD response, military resources, and local responders will be critical for large-scale WMD events.

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