University of Hawai‘i at Manoa

A Bibliography Plan: Bioterrorism

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**Introduction**

Bioterrorism is the deliberate release of viruses, bacteria, or germs into the environment to cause wide-spread illness or death among people, animals, or plants. Although these agents may be naturally occurring, they are often altered to either spread more rapidly or resist current medical treatments, thus increasing their destructiveness.\(^1\) The military use of biological weapons is old but has become a more recent threat, especially with developing nations which lack the resources for nuclear weapons.\(^2\) Since these agents are difficult to detect and relatively easy to release, they are a preferred weapon among terrorist organizations.

**Scope**

The bibliography plan includes general information on bioterrorism, the history of bioterrorism, types of biological threats, and emergency management response. Specifically, it will cover agents that directly affect humans, not indirect attacks such as food or water contamination. It will emphasize the public health aspects of managing such threats at the domestic level. It will not include information on legislation outside of the scope of public health response.

**Audience**

The bibliography is for an adult audience with materials appropriate for both the layperson and the professional. Some resources may be more technical and geared towards medical professionals, public health workers, or disaster management personnel. The guide will help someone who might be interested in learning basic
awareness about bioterrorism or someone who might need information in their professional capacity.

**Instructions for Reading Bibliography**

I used Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* as the style manual for the references.\(^3\) The search strategy is organized into categories based on the order that the research was done, with the databases listed in alphabetical order. The Source and Subject Heading Ratings table is organized in alphabetical order by Source with relevancy rank in order from most relevant to least relevant.

**Search Strategy**

**Reference Books**

**Library of Congress Subject Headings**

I began this project by looking up Bioterrorism in the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (LCSH) so that I would have a better idea of what controlled vocabulary to use.\(^4\)

BIOTERRORISM

- UF Bio-Terrorism, Biological Terrorism
- BT TERRORISM

BIOLOGICAL WARFARE [UG 447.8]

- UF Bacterial Warfare, CBR Warfare, Disease Warfare, Germ Warfare,
  - Pathogenic Bacteria – War Use
Balay’s Guide to Reference Books

I looked in Balay’s to find reference books on my topic. The results in this book were much different than in the databases. There were no entries under BIOTERRORISM, BIOLOGICAL WARFARE, BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS, BIOENGINEERING WAR, or WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. One reason for this is probably because most of the materials on this topic are post September 11th 2001 and Balay’s is a 1996 reference. Perhaps other terms that were not obviously
apparent to me might have yielded materials that discussed particular types of biological contaminants.

There were several items each under WEAPONS and PUBLIC HEALTH but none were relevant to my topic. There were also several items under TERRORISM and some of those were somewhat relevant to my topic. They were all in the Political Science section. I looked for these books in Voyager and was not surprised that they were all in the same section of the library (HV 6431), Library of Congress classification: Social pathology, Sociology and public welfare, Criminology, Crimes and offenses. I found an overwhelming number of books in this section, with over a dozen full shelves and no room to spare (looks like it’s time for some shifting). I pulled the books that I was looking for and browsed the rest of the section looking for other relevant items. Many of the titles were not specific to my topic but had a few paragraphs or a chapter that was useful. One book looked especially helpful since it was a bibliography on the literature of terrorism.\(^6\) I especially enjoyed using the self-checkout machine for the first time. 😊

Overall, this source was helpful mostly in directing me to locations in the stacks where I could find items similar to those listed in Balay’s. Most of the books listed under TERRORISM and PUBLIC HEALTH in Balay’s were too broad in topic.

**University of Hawai‘i Voyager Online Catalog\(^7\)**

I searched Hawai‘i Voyager to find locations for books. First I tried BIOTERRORISM. I retrieved hundreds of results for Subject (SKEY), about the same for Keyword (GKEY), and around 100 for Title (TKEY). Many of the results in the first two sets were not consistent with the scope of this bibliographic plan but I scanned the
list to find relevant items. This was helpful in narrowing the scope of my topic since it was apparent that it could be very broad otherwise.

I repeated the search above using PUBLIC HEALTH and received thousands of results for each search. I searched using BIOTERRORISM and PUBLIC HEALTH as subject terms and received a couple of dozen results. Then I searched these two terms as keyword (GKEY) and retrieved almost 100 results. I scanned through several pages of the larger sets, comparing them with the smaller sets to see if there were relevant results that were being eliminated in the smaller sets. In general, I felt that the smaller set from the GKEY search successfully eliminated unwanted items without losing any of the relevant ones.

I noted the call numbers and location for the relevant titles from my results lists and went to the stacks to browse the shelves. In addition to the items under Terrorism (HV 6431), many of the results were in R (Medicine), specifically RA650.5 (Public aspects of medicine, epidemics, epidemiology, quarantine, disinfection), RB37 (Pathology, clinical pathology, laboratory technique), and RC88.9 (Internal Medicine, medical emergencies, critical care, intensive care, first aid). There were also a number of useful items that dealt with the specific types of biological contaminants and their affects. Especially useful was The Bioterrorism Sourcebook which contains a broad range of information for health care workers regarding treatment for biological, chemical, and nuclear exposure.  

Within the relevant titles I found other subject headings such as EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE,Emerging Infectious Disease, Communicable Disease, and Chemical Warfare Agents which I thought might be useful. I also
tried WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. I found that most of these were contained within the results that I retrieved using BIOTERRORISM and PUBLIC HEALTH. One exception was CHEMICAL WARFARE AGENTS which was in T55.3 (Technology, Industrial safety, industrial accident prevention.

**Databases**

**America: History & Life Database Online**

I searched the terms bioterrorism and biological warfare using both natural language and controlled vocabulary to compare the differences. The results for biological warfare were similar in both searches, yielding a few hundred results. However, with bioterrorism there were no results using controlled vocabulary but a few relevant results using natural language. So I decided to browse the subject terms for anything starting with “biol”. I didn’t find any subject term that related to biological warfare so I did the search again so that I could review the records more closely and find out how the search engine was finding records under those search terms. I found that the actual subject heading to use was CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE. When I ran the search on that term I actually got a few less items in my results. I looked through quite a few of the initial set to try and see why but it was never clear.

I searched for other subject terms that might be relevant to my topic but most either produced results that were off topic or the terms were too broad. I combined various terms, using both controlled vocabulary and natural language within the same search but the best set that I found was using Biological Warfare, either as a keyword or subject search. Overall I found that this database offered good background information
on the development of biological weapons but this was not the best database for materials that were within the scope of my topic. An especially interesting article made an argument that intentional biological contamination is more of a myth than an actual threat.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{Biological Abstracts}\textsuperscript{11}

The searching format for this database allows for controlled vocabulary searching via the advanced search using the Topic Search (TS=) format. Searches can be performed within other fields but they were not pertinent to my needs. Bioterrorism in itself produced hundreds of results but many were far too technical, dealing with advanced biological aspects of contamination, for example. The database had a useful feature for refining search results by applying major concepts (something like applying subheadings to the topic). I used this feature to refine my search using Public Health and then Biological Weapons to produce a small set of highly useful results. I also used the advanced search to combine a topic search of Public Health and Bioterrorism and received the same results.

The other terms that I tried either had no relevance or a major concept had to be applied in order to eliminate the more technical results that were beyond the scope of my topic. In each case, Public Health was the most useful major concept that I applied. Overall this database provided a lot of extremely technical material that was beyond the layperson and even certain professionals. Many items were specifically geared towards biologists. However, various search strategies produced materials with good basic information for health care professionals. I found interesting information on public
health policies regarding the containment of anthrax\textsuperscript{12} and building decontamination strategies.\textsuperscript{13}

**CINAHL\textsuperscript{14}**

I used this database through my access at work. A keyword search for Bioterrorism produced a list with the term as keyword but not as a controlled vocabulary term. There were several hundred results that were highly relevant to my topic. There was a large number of the results that discussed legislation relating to Nursing and bioterrorism: continuing education requirement for bioterrorism and an online bioterrorism preparedness course.\textsuperscript{15, 16} Although this database covers materials from a Nursing perspective, I did find articles that were specifically related to Physician response to bioterrorism.

With natural language for Weapons of Mass Destruction and Biological Weapons I found a number of useful Subject Headings that I also searched under, including ANTHRAX, BOTULISM, and SMALL POX. Many of these terms produced mostly peripheral results but I found it useful to find basic information on specific agents that might be used in bioterrorism.

**Historical Abstracts Database Online\textsuperscript{17}**

I was not at all familiar with this database so I spent some time orienting myself to the layout and features. I found that there was a link to browse the subject index so I wanted to compare the LCSH subject headings with those in this database. BIOTERRORISM was not in the list at all. BIOLOGICAL WARFARE pulled up BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION so I looked at the two results. These two
records were about arms control policies so I didn’t feel that they were relevant to the scope of my topic. I continued to browse the subject index beyond BIOLOGICAL for terms that might relate to my topic and decided to look at the results for BIOMEDICINE. There were 40 items but none of the articles related to the topic. I also tried WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION and found one article that offered information about early discussions about the threat of weapons of mass destruction but this also did not apply to my topic and the article was in German.

None of the terms that I tried using Subject produced good results. They were either too broad or out of the scope of my topic. PUBLIC HEALTH retrieved over 3000 results so I decided to combine these subject terms with different key words. Combined with bioterrorism, the search produced 3 articles and two were relevant to my topic. The results of PUBLIC HEALTH and terrorism were similar. One of the articles was the same that I found in footnote #10. The other discussed the anxiety generated by the Sept. 11th attacks. Bioterrorism as natural language pulled up 5 items with about 2 that were relevant. Overall, this database did not produce good results using subject terms.

**Ingenta (Uncover)**

A search for bioterrorism yielded a few hundred results with some relevant articles but also a lot of extremely technical ones dealing with microbiological aspects of specific types of agents. One useful article provided information on decontamination procedures for anthrax exposure. The article described the lack of preparedness after the deliberate anthrax release in 2001. There were also a lot of items relating to historical incidents of biological contamination. Some especially useful articles
discussed the need for bioterrorism preparedness for nurses, psychological effects of terrorism, and some articles on historical biological contamination. One of the articles that I saw had the term Bioterror in the title so I decided to search that as well and yielded about forty more results.

I searched Chemical Warfare Agents and realized that this probably was not the best term to use since chemical weapons were not the same as biological weapons and so would not be at all relevant to my topic, even though it does relate to the broader topic of Terrorism. Most of the other terms that I tried were also not useful except for Biological Weapons, which produced a couple of hundred highly relevant results. In this database, Weapons of Mass Destruction was not as useful as in others. Many of the titles contained information on foreign and domestic policies regarding control of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Some of the terms that I searched produced some relevant results but required scanning through a number of items that were off topic. However, I found that most of those were in the list of results from Bioterrorism and biological weapons.

LexisNexis

Since there are no subject headings for LexisNexis I did a quick search for bioterrorism using keyword search and retrieved 125 results. I scanned through the list of results. There was a great deal of duplication, with an article being printed in several different sources, so the number of results was misleading. I found 22 documents that were relevant to my topic. Next I tried a guided search in General News -- Magazines and Journals, using bioterrorism, all available dates and retrieved 642 results. I scanned through the first few pages of results. Most of the items were not relevant so I
decided to narrow the search by combining public health and bioterrorism and got 261 results. I scanned through the list, reading the articles/abstracts and comparing them to the 22 that I selected in the previous search.

The results for many of the terms that I searched were brief news stories about particular people who had done some kind of work relating to biological contaminants and public health, or political figures discussing these topics in their campaign agenda, or other stories that mentioned the search term. They contained very little or no information useful for this bibliography. I feel that the quick search in this database generated better results.

MarciveWeb DOCS

I played with this search, using different search terms as controlled vocabulary and natural language and also using the browse and keyword search. Bioterrorism yielded a small set of results that were highly relevant to my topic. The other search terms that I used produced hundreds of results but many items were not relevant to my topic. For these terms I found that using the subject search in browse mode was the most useful. The list that was generated consisted of multiple entries for the particular subject, with various subheadings attached so that I could select results that were relevant to my topic. I noticed that a lot of the entries under this search were also contained in the results from the natural language search so either method retrieved similar results. BIOTERRORISM and WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION were the most useful. One article contained information on mass casualty preparedness for hospitals and was a response to the September 11th attacks. I noticed that many of
the results that I retrieved from this database were closely matched with the results of LexisNexis searches.

**MasterFILE Premier**\(^{24}\)

Searching this database was much different than most of the others so far. There was a combination of scholarly sources as well as magazines and newspapers, offering a lot more material for the layperson. Many of the results that I retrieved were not useful for my topic since there were a lot of editorial opinions. For most of the terms that I used, natural language produced too many unrelated results. Using controlled vocabulary successfully weeded out the more peripheral items without losing the useful ones. TERRORISM, like many other databases, yielded results that were too broad. I found it interesting to find more articles indicating that the US may be overreacting to the threat of bioterrorism, stating that $44 billion has been spent on biodefense since 2001 yet there has not been a bioterrorist attack since then.\(^{25}\) Biological weapons, either as natural language or controlled vocabulary was surprisingly disappointing. There were some useful results using the latter but very few. My best results were from BIOTERRORISM.

**Medline**\(^{26}\)

Search results for this database are similar to CINAHL but with more technical articles relating to forensics and pathology. Bioterrorism produced a lot of results on response and preparedness, vaccination issues for different biological agents, and the actual potential for biological contamination. Results for controlled vocabulary and natural language were similar. For example, BIOTERRORISM yielded a few thousand
items and using natural language for the same term provided just a few hundred more. An article that I found useful discussed how hospitals should handle mass casualties in the event of a bioterrorist attack. The most useful terms for this database were Bioterrorism or Biological Warfare as either controlled vocabulary or natural language. Since this was a medical database, Public Health and Disaster Management were too broad to be useful. Even when combined with other terms, they did not improve the search since searching a term such as Bioterrorism already produced articles relating to these other areas.

As with CINAHL, there was controlled vocabulary available for a number of different biological agents such as anthrax, tularemia, and botulism. Although some of the articles could be more peripheral to my topic, they offered good information on symptoms and management of these specific agents that could be used in a bioterrorist attack. Biological Warfare generated a lot of results on detecting biological contamination and issues relating to immunology and forensics.

**Military and Government Collection**

The results in this database were interesting since there were many more articles dealing with Military and first responder exposure to biological contaminants. One particular article discussed how to design a lab for maximum safety. The natural language terms did not work well on their own. Results contained too many peripheral items that did not relate to my topic. Using a term as controlled vocabulary would produce hundreds of results where a natural language search would produce thousands. BIOLOGICAL WARFARE and BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS yielded good results that covered information on specific types of biological threats. Weapons of
Mass Destruction was not useful either as controlled vocabulary or natural language.
The results dealt primarily with Congressional activities, etc. and legal sanctions placed
on other countries. I assumed that Public Health and Disaster Management (either as
controlled vocabulary or natural language) would be too broad to find any useful items
but I tried them anyway. Crossing these terms with some of the other terms that
produced good results was helpful in fine-tuning the search. However, I found that
using public health in this database brought up many more legislative articles than in
other databases.

**Newspaper Source**

This database contained few or no scholarly sources. The materials indexed in
this database were more appropriate for current events than in-depth information.
Keyword searching with individual terms produced too many peripheral articles that
were not relevant to my topic with results in the thousands or as much as hundreds of
thousands. Controlled vocabulary searching produced results that were more relevant
with just hundreds of results.

The most useful terms were BIOTERRORISM, BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS,
BIOLOGICAL WARFARE, I think that this database would be useful for someone
looking for specific events that would be covered in news stories. Many of the results
contained information on bioterrorism preparedness in various areas, including the drug
companies response to potential bioterrorist acts.
PAIS International

I liked the way that this database showed a breakdown of the data types available for a particular search: Journals, Peer-Reviewed Journals, Books, Other, Scholars, Websites. This would allow for extensive research and fine-tuning a search if someone wanted more information. Results using controlled vocabulary compared with natural language were similar with the latter yielding only a few hundred more results. I noticed that when using biological warfare, biological weapons, or bioterrorism as either natural language or controlled vocabulary, I was retrieving a lot of the same articles. After searching each of these terms, I looked at several articles in each set just to compare the descriptors and found that many of the articles included both BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS and BIOLOGICAL WARFARE, and sometimes even BIOTERRORISM in the same reference. I found an article on the history of biological warfare that was particularly useful because it covered genetic engineering in relation to biological agents which is a key difference between naturally occurring contaminants and intentional release of the same agents.

Internet Resources

Google Scholar

Results from this online search engine were much different than the databases. There were a wide range of results from all of the search terms that I tried. I didn’t even try Public Health or Disaster Management because I knew that the terms would be too broad. As it was, I was getting tens of thousands of results. The information that I retrieved included historical information about biological threats in various countries.
how to respond to specific types of threats, and even information on detection tools that are currently being used. There were also a lot of results that covered public health and clinical issues relating to biological contamination. I found that all of the terms that I searched offered equally comparable results except for Biological Contaminants which produced a lot of items that did not relate to Bioterrorism-type agents.

An especially useful aspect of Google Scholar was that after searching for a particular term, there was an informative bar along the top of the results page that provided a link to a definition of the term. Another link in that bar limited the results to recent articles.

Internet Public Library

The user interface and results list was much different than any of the databases. Searched produced lists that were categorized by Subject Collections, Associations on the Net, Magazines, KidSpace, and TeenSpace. A lot of the results that I was getting seemed to have little or nothing to do with the terms that I searched. Perhaps there was some peripheral relation to the search term that I could not recognize. For example, Weapons of Mass Destruction brought up a link to a site about Land Trusts. I browsed the site but could not find any relation to the terms. Many of the other links were for sites dealing with nuclear issues and also were not relevant.

Surprisingly, the most relevant results were from Anthrax. This produced just a few results but I found these sites particularly useful. One site was for a television show that was broadcast by PBS and included, historical information, resources for teachers, future planning, and a short multimedia file on Small Pox.
Conclusion
Initially I thought that this project was intimidating and that I would never be able to get it done. However, after getting started and just plugging away, one step at a time it was a nice challenge to get this accomplished. I thought that this exercise was a great experience in fine tuning a search strategy on a particular subject, learning about the differences between some of the databases, and experimenting with various search terms. I think that knowing which sources to look at for specific types of information would be the most difficult aspect of Reference Librarian work, especially when I look at the long list of databases available that I didn't even use. I was somewhat frustrated at Hawai'i Voyager because I could not find an easy way of excluding specific types of materials, such as the numerous reports from the National Research Council and US Congress and these particular items were extremely prolific. Because of this, I felt that looking for the general sections where books relating to my topic are located and then browsing the shelves was the best course of action.
### Appendix I – Source and Subject Heading Ratings

<table>
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<th>Source</th>
<th>Subject Heading</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
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</thead>
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<td>BIOENGINEERING WAR</td>
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</tr>
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Appendix II – Sample Annotated Bibliography

General Bioterrorism Resources


Serves as an access point for numerous published documents relating to bioterrorism. Contains a chronological list of news articles on all topics relating to bioterrorism dating back to 2001. Also provides a list of recent journal articles, congressional documents, and official reports. A bibliography of selected readings, some with online full text, from official biological contamination organizations. A short list of several biological contaminants provides comprehensive data for each item, such as a general overview, images, selected readings, guidelines, and more. CIDRAP is a part of the Academic Health Center at the University of Minnesota.


Questions the validity of the perceived threat of bioterrorism. Uses historical examples of accepted myths and actual cases of intentional biological contamination. Indicates that there is no increased threat of bioterrorism since Sept. 11th. Emphasizes that other
naturally spreading public health contagions are more threatening than any biological weapons. Provides specific examples to support the arguments. Author is an associate professor at Hunter College and has published in core medical journals.

Public Health Response to Bioterrorism


Diagnosis and therapy review for 13 bacteria, viruses, and toxins of concern for physicians. Includes sections on blast injuries, nuclear and radiologic weapons, and the psychological effects of terrorist acts. Section on physician’s response to mass casualty and a guide to identify bioterrorism diseases. Provides in depth descriptions of biological agents, including symptoms and treatment, with black and white pictures. Sections are written by panels of experts in their respective fields. Full text e-book CD-ROM included and is downloadable to a PDA.


Discusses the need for reassessment in the Public Health System’s response to terrorism and biological contamination as a response to September 11th attacks. Divided in to three parts containing examples past response to terrorist attacks, types of
terrorist weapons used, and future challenges in public health preparedness. Table provides a bibliographic list of publications and news stories for further research. Highly useful appendix of organizations and resources with various forms of contact information. List of editors and contributors along with their credentials and organizational affiliation.


Identifies deficiencies within the public health system regarding policies and regulations for managing biological contamination. Table shows comparison between bioterrorism legislation before and after the 2001 anthrax attacks. Appendixes contain bioterrorism-related data regarding funding and legislation. Identifies various response agencies at the local, state, and national level and examines their role in bioterrorism. A timeline of events for anthrax attacks offers a specific example of public health response to contamination.


An authoritative guide on bioterrorism for the lay person or professionals. Provides a list of biological agents with comprehensive information on each item. Includes links to
State Departments of Health. Information for professionals with links to training, preparation, and various guides. Centers for Disease Control is a known authority in communicable diseases.
End Notes

9 America: History & Life Database Online [database online] (ABC-Clio Inc, 1964-).
11 Biological Abstracts Online [database online] (The Thompson Corporation, 1969-).
17 Historical Abstracts Database Online [database online] (ABC-Clio Inc., 1450-).
19 Ingenta (Uncover) [database online] (Ingenta, 2006). [NOTE: no date given for start of database].
21 LexisNexis [database online] (LexisNexis, Reed Elsevier, 1986-).
22 MarciveWeb DOCS [database online] (MarciveWeb DOCS, 1976-).
30 Newspaper Source [database online] (Ebsco Industries, Inc., 2006) [NOTE: no date given for start of database.]
32 PAIS International [database online] (CSA Illunia, 1915-).
34 Google Scholar [search engine online]; available from http://www.google scholar.com; Internet; accessed 20 November 2006.
36 Internet Public Library [search engine online]; available from http://www.ipl.org; Internet; accessed 20 November 2006