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Bio-terrorism: A call for renewed action

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Biological attack, unlike chemical or nuclear attack; may go relatively undetected for hours, days or even weeks, depending on the agent until people, animals or plants start showing symptoms of diseases. Historical perspective on biological attacks has proven that it's the most silent tool that could be used by terrorists to carry out deadly attacks.

In 2001, anthrax attacks through the US mail infected 11 people with inhalation anthrax, of which 5 died. In 1984, the cult followers of Baguhan Rajineeh sickened 751 people in Oregon by placing salmonella bacteria in salad bars in 10 restaurants to keep people from voting in the election.

In spite of this fearful historical evidences, biological attack is yet to get the optimum attention it deserves unlike its other counterparts; nuclear and chemical attacks. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011 report, over 25 percent of states lack the capacity and infrastructure in their laboratories to respond in the event of a bioterrorist attack. 51 of 83 state and local Laboratory Response Network (LRN) reference laboratories have had delays receiving CDC-supplied reagents for detection of bioterrorist agents. 40 of the 51 State Public Health Laboratories have cited difficulty recruiting and retaining staff for bioterrorism preparedness. Fewer than one-quarter of states and very few cities have achieved "green" status for the Strategic National Stockpile. Without this status, they won't be able to receive countermeasures and medical supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile to administer and distribute during a public health emergency. Unfortunately biological attack holds a lot of prospect as a tool for potential terrorists because of its unique operating features.

This paper discusses the real threats of biological attack as a terrorism tool in this vicious 21st century world's socio-political and religious divide and also shed lights on the steps and measures individuals, community and government could take to improve on preventing and protecting the public against future incidence of biological attacks.

Biography

Chukwudi Sunday Omattah completed his master degrees and currently pursuing his PhD from Federal University Of Technology, Akure, Nigeria where he also lectures. He has published more than 12 papers in reputable journals and also serving as an editorial board member of reputable African health journal.