

Essentials of Terror Medicine.

By S. Shapira, J. Hammond, and L. Cole. New York: Springer Science & Business Media; 2009.

Essentials of Terror Medicine (editors, S. Shapira, J. Hamond, and L. Cole) is the latest single source reference to address the multitude of issues that arise in our fairly elementary experience in disaster preparedness and response related to terrorist acts. The authors have distinguished “terror medicine” from the specialty of “emergency medicine” and the practice of “disaster medicine” by defining emergency medicine as the evaluation and treatment of unexpected illness and injury, and disaster medicine as those characteristics dealing with prevention, response, and rehabilitation of health problems arising from disaster events. They have elected to separate terror medicine from disaster medicine

by defining the distinctive features related to the medical issues arising from terrorist weapons and the expected unique responses from the healthcare community.

With this premise, the international authorship has addressed a wide variety of topics that include prehospital, hospital, and general system preparedness; typical weapons and their injury and treatment characteristics; and issues involved in the aftermath of such horrific events. Although citizens of the United States have fortunately little exposure to terrorist attacks, the same cannot be said of citizens from other countries. The authors of this text include prominent and vastly experienced Israeli physicians who relate their experience not only in disaster and terrorist attack responses but also in the details of reaching a state of preparedness when these attacks occur.

The challenge for readers of this text is the applicability of the lessons

from countries where terrorism is a daily concern to a country in which even the memories of September 11 have dimmed. Convincing hospital administrators and surgeons to alter the operating schedule and the normal flow of emergency department patients for a drill, as necessary as it may be, is at best difficult. But this text provides an infrastructure on which to develop such drills.

Many articles have appeared in the literature in the past decade regarding medical responses to disasters and terrorist attacks. *Essentials of Terror Medicine* does a nice job of consolidating and distilling important and practical information into a single source, with a truly qualified list of contributors.

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