

BIOTERRORISM : ROLE OF CLINICAL LABORATORY IN MEETING THE CHALLENGE

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Intentional use of pathogenic microorganisms to kill large number of people and undermine political and social institutions has become one of the most vicious threats to civilized society in recent times. The clinical laboratory plays a pivotal role in responding to an act of bioterrorism. Laboratory should be prepared to respond rapidly by providing diagnostic kits for the detection and identification of specific agents, so that specific therapy and victim management can be initiated in a timely manner. Clinical laboratories should identify their current resources and extent of support they can provide and inform the authorities of their state of readiness. Knowledge of the current biosafety level within the laboratory and adequate training of the laboratory personnel are very much essential. A greater capacity for surveillance at the national, state and local levels is much needed in protecting against biological warfare.