

# What do we really know about the history of biological weapons use?

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Credit: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

Few comprehensive, definitive histories of biological warfare have been written, many events reported in the literature never happened, and few details are available about some uses of biological weapons that most certainly did occur. A review of the literature on actual and alleged instances of biological warfare finds that the incidence of illicit biological agent use has been greater than many people may realize, even as the effects have been relatively limited, as described in an article published in *Health Security*.

In "[The History of Biological Weapons Use: What We Know and What We Don't](#)," W. Seth Carus, PhD, National Defense University, Ft. McNair, Washington, DC, provides a historical perspective of biological weapons development and alleged use from the earliest primitive uses through germ theory, advances in science and technology, and major wars. Dr. Carus reviews the main gaps in current knowledge and the implications of false allegations.

"In this article, Dr. Carus delivers a superb and authoritative history of mankind's biological weapons use," says Editor-in-Chief Thomas V. Inglesby, MD, CEO and Director, UPMC Center for Health Security, Baltimore, MD. "As we think about how to prevent [biological weapons](#) use in the future, it is critical to understand their role in the past, and this article provides a comprehensive view of that past. Dr. Carus also points out how much we don't know and prescribes the research agenda that would help us answer important questions."

**More information:** The article is available free on the [Health Security](#) website until October 1, 2015.

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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