

New book helps citizen scientists navigate complexities of infectious disease outbreaks

April 10 2024



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Citizen scientists have long contributed to the collection and observation of natural events—from weather watchers to wildlife trackers—with thousands of organized community projects spanning decades.

Beginning in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to an explosion of novice infectious disease detectives, adding to the collection of science enthusiasts.

To give these new disease detectives more tools for their craft, a new book written by two Georgetown University global [health](#) researchers, "Outbreak Atlas," helps translate the complex interconnectedness of outbreak responses used by professionals across different fields, presenting accessible information that ensures a shared understanding of the essential activities to control an outbreak.

"We know there are thousands of people who have taken a keen interest in tracking outbreaks after living through the COVID-19 pandemic," explains co-author Rebecca Katz, Ph.D., MPH, director of the Georgetown University Center for Global Health Science and Security (GHSS). "We hope our book helps lift the curtain on what goes on behind the scenes in the management of an outbreak including topics such as preparedness, response and recovery."

The book translates the work of the Georgetown Outbreak Activity Library (GOAL), an interactive online tool for global health practitioners that Katz and Moore developed, that outlines what needs to be done, when, and by whom, throughout all phases of an outbreak—including preparedness, response, and recovery.

"GOAL helps guide professionals to be prepared for an outbreak and our book translates that information for a lay audience so they are empowered to be a part of this important work too," Katz says.

"More than 100 [case studies](#) and the visuals we've included in the book give real world examples of outbreak management," says co-author Mackenzie S. Moore, M.Sc., a scientist and global health researcher, a member of GHSS. "Outbreak Atlas contributes to the larger goal of

increasing public health literacy in the general public. Successful [outbreak](#) response relies heavily on public support and [community engagement](#), and we hope to equip [citizen scientists](#) with information that empowers them to make informed decisions that protect themselves, their friends, and their families.."

The book will be available for purchase at online retailers beginning April 15.

Provided by Georgetown University Medical Center

Citation: New book helps citizen scientists navigate complexities of infectious disease outbreaks (2024, April 10) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-04-citizen-scientists-complexities-infectious-disease.html>

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