Medical Xpress

Researchers provide resource for patient care in chemical and biological attacks

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The neurologic effects and treatment options for exposure to biologic and chemical agents are outlined in a newly published article by neurologists from the University of Colorado School of Medicine who collaborated on the article with military physicians.

"We wrote this article to help neurohospitalists and other health care providers identify unusual neurologic illnesses that could result from potential biological or chemical attacks," said senior author Daniel M. Pastula, MD, MHS. "While we hope such attacks never happen, our goal is to provide a resource for health care providers so that we can all be prepared in an emergency."

Pastula is an assistant professor in the CU School of Medicine's Department of Neurology and in the Department of Medicine's Division of Infectious Diseases, and an assistant professor of epidemiology at the Colorado School of Public Health.

The article, "Neuroterrorism Preparedness for the Neurohospitalist," published October 21 in the journal *The Neurohospitalist*, provides an overview of biological and chemical agents that might be used in potential terror attacks. Such agents can affect the nervous system and lead to paralysis, respiratory failure, and/or encephalopathy.

In the article, the authors describe how to recognize, diagnose, treat, and report exposures to anthrax, botulism, brucella, plague, smallpox, organophosphates, nerve agents, cyanide, or carfentanil.

"Our goal is to better prepare health care providers to clinically recognize and help manage potential effects of such agents. Additionally, we stress the importance of collaborating with state and local health departments when use of such agents is suspected." Pastula said.

More information: Maj Samuel A. Ralston et al, Neuroterrorism Preparedness for the Neurohospitalist, *The Neurohospitalist* (2018). DOI: 10.1177/1941874418806668

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