

Bio Terror Bible

EXPOSING THE COMING BIO-TERROR PANDEMIC

BIOTERRORBIBLE.COM: Totally inexcusable lab [“accidents”](#) have been occurring at BSL Labs (biosafety level labs) within the United States and around the world. Should a bio-terror pandemic arise, it is possible that a lab “accident” may serve as the scapegoat and source of the deadly pathogen.

Title: FBI Investigating Boston Tularemia Exposures

Date: January 21, 2005

Source: [NTI](#) (Nuclear Threat Initiative)

Abstract: Last year's exposures of three Boston University researchers to tularemia are being investigated by a number of agencies, including the FBI, the Associated Press reported yesterday (see [GSN](#), Jan. 20).

The FBI is mandated to investigate any release of biological agents that could be used by terrorists, according to AP.

Under Massachusetts state law, public health agencies must be notified “immediately, but in no case more than 24 hours” after the release of a reportable disease is identified, said Dr. Anita Barry, Boston's director of communicable disease control.

Researchers became ill in May and September of last year, and test results returned Oct. 28 indicated they had been working with contaminated material, according to AP. Work with the pathogen stopped Nov. 4, but the state Department of Public Health and the Boston Public Health Commission were not notified until several days afterward.

Thomas Moore, acting provost of the university's medical campus, said Wednesday that he could not explain the delay.

“I have been unable to come up with reasons why time went by from the 28th to the 9th,” Moore told the Boston Globe, adding that when laboratory personnel received the Oct. 28 test results, “they must have assumed something was amiss.”

Peter Rice would no longer serve as the BU chief of infectious disease as his inadequate leadership contributed to safety problems at the laboratory, university officials said (Associated Press/[Worcester Telegram & Gazette](#), Jan. 20).

Meanwhile, residents opposing construction near their homes of a Level-4 biohazard laboratory at Boston University are suing the school, the state and the city in hopes of stopping the project.

The 10 plaintiffs claim that the defendants ignored environmental laws, did not seriously examine alternative sites and failed to adequately study the potential for a biohazard incident, the *Boston Herald* reported.

"We never trusted them, and now everyone sees what we've been talking about," said Rose Arruda, referring to news of the tularemia exposures.

The litigation is "completely without merit," said Boston University spokeswoman Ellen Berlin, adding that the new laboratory would have the highest level of security and that the type of error that led to last year's exposures "would not have happened" in a Level-4 facility ([NTI, 2005](#)).

Title: Faulty Aerosol Chamber Infects Three

Date: April 18, 2005

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: A leaky aerosol chamber manufactured by the University of Wisconsin at Madison was responsible for three laboratory-acquired tuberculosis infections in a Seattle BSL-3 lab last year. The infections have not been made public until now. Nearly twenty Madison chambers exist across the US and in India, New Zealand, and Northern Ireland. While tuberculosis is not a biological weapons agent, the accident underscores the inherent dangers when working with dangerous disease agents, and the grave safety risks of the US biodefense program, which is encouraging more scientists to deliberately aerosolize bioweapons agents in Madison chambers and similar equipment.

The Madison chamber incident is the latest to be reported in a series of US lab accidents, including infections and/or mishandling of anthrax, tularemia, and pandemic influenza. At the encouragement of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Madison chambers have been purchased for use in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, Colorado, Wisconsin, and California, as well as India, Northern Ireland, and New Zealand. More of the suspect chambers may be in use; but the legal counsel of the University of Wisconsin at Madison has refused to answer questions and has been reluctant to promptly answer requests filed under Wisconsin open records law.

The Chamber: The Madison aerosol chamber is a specialized type of lab equipment. The chamber is used to infect animals with disease through their lungs. Cultures of organisms causing tuberculosis or the bioweapons agents anthrax, Q fever, or brucella and others are placed in a part of the device called a nebulizer, which mixes the agents with air. The resulting aerosol is directed into a metal chamber in which animals have been placed on racks. The animals then breathe in the agent. The integrity of the complicated device's "O rings", seals, and other fittings is critical to preventing the aerosols from escaping the chamber and causing accidental infections. But the Madison chamber in Seattle, Washington leaks badly, and in 2004 it caused three laboratory-acquired tuberculosis infections at a BSL-3 lab shared by Corixa Corporation and the Infectious Disease Research Institute (IDRI).

"Foolproof": In late 2003, the Seattle lab began using a Madison aerosol chamber to infect guinea pigs with tuberculosis. Several batches were exposed over a period of months. By March 2004, a serious problem was detected when three employees, who previously tested negative for tuberculosis, came back with positive tests, or "conversions", indicating that they had been exposed to the agent.

The State of Washington opened an investigation. [The State's report was obtained by the Sunshine Project and is available at our website.](#) According to the report, in 2003 the IDRI team was trained to use the chamber by its inventor, a professor at Texas A&M University. IDRI was also trained by representatives of the University of Wisconsin at Madison. According to the State of Washington's investigation, Dr. David McMurray, the inventor and a tuberculosis researcher, made audacious safety claims about the chamber. The report says that McMurray claimed that "the chamber was so safe that there was no need to even locate it in a BSL-3 environment", that it was "foolproof", and that "respirator use was not necessary".

The Leaks: Interviews with IDRI staff by state investigators revealed that a leaky airflow meter was probably responsible for the infections. The investigation also revealed that IDRI staff had repeatedly encountered other dangerous problems. The chamber operator told state investigators "the Chamber

seals deteriorate quickly, crack and last about a month" and in June 2004, well after the first problems were thought to be fixed, "another big leak was recently found." Another researcher said "several seals of the Chamber were found to be cracked". IDRI does not conduct biodefense research.

Leak Replicated, No Apparent Safety Advisory: The airflow meter also leaked in tests of a Madison chamber located in Fort Collins, Colorado. Although the University of Wisconsin at Madison was contacted by the State of Washington in the course of the investigation, two Madison aerosol chamber customers contacted by the Sunshine Project say that they have not received any safety advisories. Nor has the chamber's manual been changed in response to the State's findings. The [current manual](#), obtained by the Sunshine Project under Wisconsin open records law, is dated 22 April 2002.

Biodefense Use: Many Madison chambers are used for tuberculosis studies; but others are used for biodefense. In December 2003, the Madison chamber was presented at a National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) biodefense workshop. Biodefense use includes: At Texas A&M University, scientists are using it to aerosolize brucella and Q fever. At the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, it is used by an anthrax researcher funded by the Department of Defense and NIAID. With NIAID encouragement, other biodefense projects using the Madison chamber are likely planned or even underway.

Conclusions: The Sunshine Project has been calling attention to the safety and security dangers of the US biodefense program since 2000. This case underscores how the 'precise, clean and neat' public image of BSL-3 and BSL-4 facilities that is promoted by NIAID and labs is frequently at odds with messy and risky realities.

According to the Sunshine Project's Edward Hammond, *"It should not fall to a small non-profit to reveal incidents such as this one. In this case, the institutions involved apparently didn't even inform their peers about the problems. Public safety and an informed debate about the biodefense program require the government to mandate public disclosure of all significant lab accidents. This may be more cold water on overheated biodefense safety claims; but we frankly wonder how many more serious problems have been kept out of the public eye."*

The United States does not have comprehensive laboratory safety law. The Madison chamber failure and consequent lab-acquired infections are yet more evidence of the urgent need for binding laboratory biosafety law, backed by enforceable international standards ([Sunshine Project, 2005](#)).

Title: Plague-Infected Lab Mice Missing In New Jersey

Date: September 15, 2005

Source: [MSNBC](#)

Abstract: Three mice infected with the bacteria responsible for bubonic plague apparently disappeared from a laboratory about two weeks ago, and authorities launched a search though health experts said there was scant public risk.

The mice were unaccounted-for at the Public Health Research Institute, which is on the campus of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and conducts bioterrorism research for the federal government.

Federal officials said the mice may never be accounted for. Among other things, the rodents may have been stolen, eaten by other lab animals or just misplaced in a paperwork error.

If the mice got outside the lab, they would have already died from the disease, state Health Commissioner Fred Jacobs said.

The possibility of theft prompted the institute to interrogate two dozen of its employees and conduct lie detector tests, The Star-Ledger of Newark reported Thursday.

The FBI said it was investigating. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is also investigating, the newspaper reported.

University officials did not immediately return a call seeking comment Thursday morning.

The mice were injected as part of an inoculation and vaccination experiment, investigators said.

Health officials say 10 to 20 people in the United States contract plague each year, usually through infected fleas or rodents. It can be treated with antibiotics, but about one in seven U.S. cases is fatal. Bubonic plague is not contagious, but left untreated it can transform into pneumonic plague, which can be spread from person to person.

The incident came as federal authorities investigate possible corruption in the school's finances. The FBI is reviewing political donations and millions of dollars in no-bid contracts awarded to politically connected firms ([MSNBC, 2005](#)).