

Capsule

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What's new? What's hot? What's timely? If you don't have time to search the Internet for the latest developments that might impact your work environment, you just might find some of this information in the "Capsule" column. Please e-mail any comments or suggestions to ekrisiunas@aol.com or to Co-Editor Barbara Johnson at barbara_johnson@verizon.net or Co-Editor Karen B. Byers at karen_byers@dfci.harvard.edu.

Management of Accidental Laboratory Exposure to *Burkholderia pseudomallei* and *B. mallei*

B. pseudomallei has been designated a select agent by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (www.cdc.gov/od/sap). Interest in this organism has been fueled by the establishment of Regional Centers of Excellence across the United States, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) for research into emerging infectious diseases and biothreat organisms. The number of investigators who are working on strains of *B. pseudomallei* is growing, and research laboratories require clearly defined readiness guidelines in the event that one or more persons require postexposure prophylaxis (PEP). Workers in clinical diagnostic laboratories may also be unwittingly exposed to *B. pseudomallei* before its identity is recognized, as exemplified by recent reports.

Peacock, S. J., Schweizer, H. P., Dance, D. A. B., Smith, T. L., Gee, J. E., Wuthiekunan, V., et al. (2008). Management of accidental laboratory exposure to *Burkholderia pseudomallei* and *B. mallei* [online report]. *Emerging Infectious Diseases* [serial on the Internet]. Available from: www.cdc.gov/EID/content/14/7/e2.htm

Coronavirus Antibodies in Bat Biologists

In this brief report, the authors were looking for serologic evidence of Coronavirus infection among bat biologists attending an international meeting in the United States. Of the 350 registered biologists, 90 (26%) participated. Of the participants, 89% had worked with or studied bats in North America, 21% in South America, 11% in Africa, 8% in Asia, 7% in Europe, and 6% in Australia. The survey found no evidence of SARS-CoV transmission from bats to humans. However, the authors go on to state that additional studies of bat SARS-CoV infections in a larger number of persons who have been in contact with the species found to be positive for SARS-

like CoV are needed before the risk for SARS-like CoV transmission from bats to humans can be clearly understood.

Stockman, L. J., Haynes, L. M., Miao, C., Harcourt, J. L., Rupprecht, C. E., Ksiazek, T. G., et al. (2008). Coronavirus antibodies in bat biologists [letter]. *Emerging Infectious Diseases* [serial on the Internet]. Available from: www.cdc.gov/EID/content/14/6/999.htm

DHS Issues Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Proposed National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF)—June 20, 2008

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate issued on June 20, 2008 the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility Draft Environmental Impact Statement (NBAF Draft EIS) for public review and comment.

"The proposed NBAF would enable us to meet the challenges posed by the intentional or unintentional introduction of a foreign animal or zoonotic disease that could threaten the U.S. livestock industry, food supply, and public health," said Homeland Security Under Secretary for Science and Technology Jay Cohen. "By expanding and modernizing our ability to develop advanced test and evaluation capabilities and vaccine countermeasures for these types of diseases, we protect not only our nation's security, but also the vibrancy of our agriculture system."

A Notice of Availability will be published in the *Federal Register*, and DHS will host public meetings near each proposed site later this summer. The NBAF Draft EIS, as well as information on submitting comments during the 60-day comment period, will also be available at www.dhs.gov/nbaf. The NBAF Final EIS is expected in late fall 2008, and a Record of Decision on if, and where, the NBAF would be constructed will be published no less than 30 days after the completion of the Final EIS. Available from: www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1213985419513.shtm

Iran Biosafety Clearing House (IBCH)

This is an interesting web site with links to biosafety guidelines in the U.S. and other parts of the world. It still appears to need some additional work and updating. Some links are in Arabic. Available from: <http://ibch.nrcgeb.ac.ir/>