

PLAGUES IN MAN
ISC 2937; R. H. REEVES
INTRODUCTION

Types of plagues:

Bacterial diseases

Plague "Black Death"
Leprosy
Cholera
Tuberculosis ("Consumption")
Syphilis ("The Great pox")

Viral diseases

Smallpox
Influenza
AIDS
Yellow Fever & Dengue Fever
Hepatitis

Others

Malaria
Sleeping sickness

Outbreaks (New and Emerging Diseases):

Bacterial

Food Poisonings
E coli: O157:H7
Salmonella
Lyme Disease
Legionnaires' Disease
Parrot Fever/Psittacosis

Viral

Ebola and Marburg Hemorrhagic Fevers
Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (Sin Nombre virus)
Lassa Fever
West Nile Fever/Encephalitis

Other

Kuru
vCJD, Mad cow disease

Plagues and pestilence have visited mankind since ancient times, and in a number of recorded events, there have been drastic and long lasting effects on human history. It has even been suggested that the human gene pool has been altered by some of the more devastating plagues.

We will review the history of human plagues and their effect on the human population. Tied up with this history is the progress of medicine and in last two centuries the emergence of public health, treatment for and prevention of these infectious diseases. Twenty years ago, in fact, the agent for one of the great world plagues was completely eradicated due to human intervention. However, because of the expanding world population and the mixing of rural and urban peoples, new, emerging diseases have again plagued mankind, and millions of people have died.

This course will examine not only the history of human plagues, but the nature and pathogenicity of the agents that cause these devastating diseases. Bacteria, viruses and other infectious agents will be examined in terms of their pathogenic potential. We will also examine modern medicine's attempts to eliminate these agents or to prevent or treat the diseases they cause.