

## Preface

The atrocities of 11 September 2001 and the more recent casualties due to anthrax bioterrorism have dramatically emphasized the potential danger of biological warfare and bioterrorism. Faced with such threat, the Editors of "Antiviral Research" have taken the initiative to edit a special issue of the Journal, focusing on Viral Bioterrorism and Biodefense. It is the first time in history that a special volume would be dedicated to this topic, which in view of the current circumstances would be highly timely, appropriate and relevant. To what extent could viruses be "weaponized", i.e. turned into biological weapons, and used for biowarfare, which viruses would lend themselves for this purpose, how should we estimate the risk and the consequences, which diagnostic measures should be taken, and how should we react prophylactically, and, if needed, therapeutically?

These are the topics addressed in this special issue on "Viral Bioterrorism and Biodefense" by the world experts that we, Erik De Clercq and Earl Kern, have consulted. They have delineated the problem of viral bioterrorism, the epidemio-

logical aspects involved, as well as the diagnostic, prophylactic and therapeutic measures that could be taken to curb this, as yet unforeseeable, threat of viral bioterrorism.

We recommend to take at heart the different chapters by our colleagues, whom, in these introductory remarks, we want to thank wholeheartedly for their invaluable contribution to this very special volume of Antiviral Research. We sincerely hope this special issue will have a long-lasting message to carry, long after the present threat of bioterrorism has, hopefully, ceased to exist.

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