



Man and Microbes: Disease and Plagues in History and Modern Times

Arno Karlen

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AIDS, Lyme disease, and the deadly hantavirus are just a few of the dozens of new diseases to arrive in recent years. Old ones such as TB and cholera have returned with sharper virulence. Where do new diseases come from? Why are old ones back as vicious changelings? Why now? We created this epidemic of epidemics by transforming our environment and behavior - our landscape, technology, and sex lives. Thus we hasten microbes' evolution and our own, making the world a global village for diseases. In *Man and Microbes*, respected science writer Arno Karlen presents a dramatic panorama of the natural history of disease. Drawing on case studies and tales of medical detection, he uncovers the ills of ancient hunter-gatherers, relates the rise of diseases that came with each domesticated species, and exposes the origins of modern urban epidemics. Citing original sources and extensive research, Karlen recounts the terror of measles and smallpox that raked the ancient empires of Rome and China; the intertwined stories of leprosy and tuberculosis throughout thousands of years of history; the onslaught of European microbes that devastated the peoples of the Americas far more than did the firearms of their conquerors; and the much-forgotten influenza pandemic of 1918 that killed tens of millions. He also analyzes the most recent medical reports of mysterious new diseases from around the world and provides a view of how they have arisen and what they bode for the future. *Man and Microbes* makes clear that infection is a natural and necessary part of life. It shows how the search for food, shelter, and a safer, more prosperous life has altered the environment, changed the dance of adaptation between humans and microbes, and generated new diseases. The means to surmount the growing public health crisis in our ever-accelerating global society lie in the same ingenuity that created it. Understanding the complex and vital relationships

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