The Effects of September 11, 2001, on the Mentality and Health of Americans

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The tragedy of September 11, 2001, will be remembered as a pivotal moment in the country. Before this attack most Americans believed that the United States was impenetrable; that if agencies like the FBI or CIA had knowledge an attack it would be shared with the public or would be quietly prevented. Initially it brought the country together as a patriotic movement swept the nation, but that faded as people became disenchanted with the War on Terrorism. At the time of the attack most of us were in such a state of shock that we did not realize that there was another possible threat. Officials at the time were afraid that the hijacked planes were laden with some bioterrorism agent such as anthrax. Luckily this was not the case but if it had been, the germ or toxin could have exploded from the planes as they hit the towers and rained down upon New York City affecting anyone in the area. Secondary affects could have been felt throughout the world as people continued to go in and out of the city if the bioterrorism agent had been infectious.

Recently, a debate has been established as to whether or not people who were at ground zero and later experienced reparatory problems can correlate their diseases to inhalation of the debris at the scene. There have been many reports that the day after a person worked at ground zero they coughed up soot and gravel. Confirming whether or not a disease like emphysema can be directly correlated, years later, to this one event is near impossible. This controversy opens up the question of who is responsible for the medical bills and compensation of the workers. Even if it could be proven irrevocably that an individual’s disease was caused by working at or near the Twin Towers should the government pay?

The attack on the Twin Towers that occurred on September 11th has affected the carefree mentality of many Americans and brought a medical controversy to the forefront of many minds. The attacks have also increased our country’s awareness of the threat of terrorism and biological warfare.