

H5N1

"Medicine is a social science, and politics is nothing else but medicine on a large scale"—Rudolf Virchow

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July 15, 2017

Suggested summer reading

For some reason we're supposed to abstain from reading books until we're on holiday and basting ourselves with sunscreen on some sweltering beach. Then we're supposed to lug some great doorstop of a best-seller with us and try to read it in the glare.

The mere idea is enough to fill me with horror. But if you do find yourself with time on your hands this summer, I suggest you stay in the shade in a comfortable chair, with a cooler full of good craft beer close at hand, and catch up on some really good books about diseases and the politics of public health. Here are the books I've read and reviewed for The Tyee in the last couple of years:

Among others

Deadly River: Cholera and Cover-Up in Post-Earthquake Haiti, by Ralph R. Frerichs. This is a genuine, page-turning medical thriller about Dr. Renaud Piarroux, who confirmed the source of the 2010 cholera outbreak in Haiti, and the denial he faced from PAHO and the CDC. To spare the UN and the US government from political embarrassment, cholera raged on—an utterly avoidable disaster. A copy should be placed on the desk of every health bureaucrat in PAHO, the CDC, ECDC, and WHO, with a quiet suggestion that they commit the entire book to memory because it will be on the final exam.