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**BOOK REVIEWS**  
**The Hot Zone<sup>1</sup>**

by  
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EBOLA AND MARBURG ARE HIGHLY LETHAL viral haemorrhagic fevers usually only seen in the wilds of Africa. In *The Hot Zone*, Richard Preston has detailed the recent outbreak of Ebola in a monkey facility in Reston, just outside Washington, DC. In sometimes overly graphic detail, Preston describes the resulting investigation and cleanup of the facility by the Centre for Disease Control and the US Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Disease. This particular strain of Ebola was fortunately not pathogenic in man. The outbreak does illustrate the ease of spread of potentially highly infectious and highly lethal micro-organisms rapidly around the world.

Preston has included details of the other Ebola and Marburg outbreaks. His clinical descriptions are unfortunately graphically sensationalised and his descriptions of the events are cursory at best. For those interested in the history of the viral haemorrhagic fever and other emerging disease outbreaks, I would recommend *The Coming Plagues* which provides a far more detailed and comprehensive review of the area. Given these criticisms, Preston has produced a very readable book which is essential reading for anyone with an interest in infectious disease or public health. The book has already formed the basis for a documentary, *The Plague Monkeys*, and some of the background for the recent movie, *Outbreak?* both of which are recommended viewing.