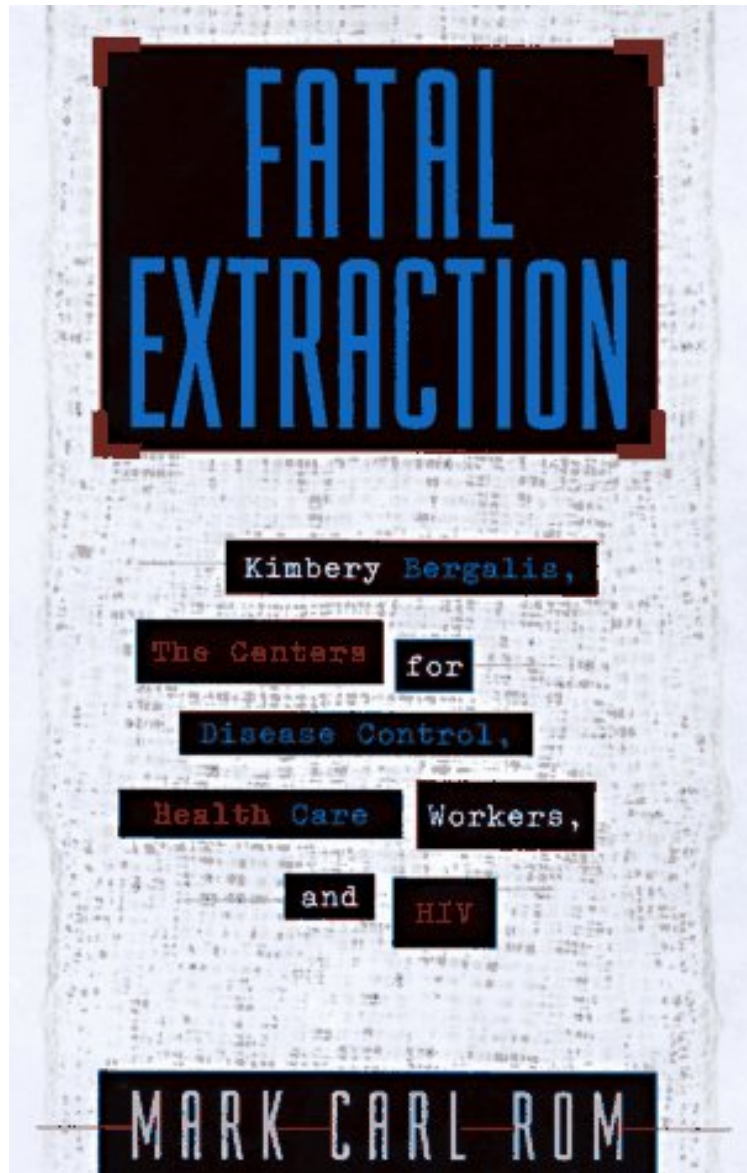


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Fatal Extraction: The Story Behind the Florida Dentist Accused of Infecting His Patients with HIV and Poisoning Public Health

Mark Carl Rom

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Mark Carl Rom : Fatal Extraction: The Story Behind the Florida Dentist Accused of Infecting His Patients with HIV and Poisoning Public Health before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fatal Extraction: The Story Behind the Florida Dentist Accused of Infecting His Patients with HIV and Poisoning Public Health:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Deadly Smile By Jehovah The author has provided a very methodical look at the case and has done a fantastic job at explaining both the lab based science and field surveillance work performed in such cases. It is extremely technical for the non scientist, but given some time and patience the reader benefits from a calm approach to a situation often argued from an extremely emotional approach.

The investigation into how Kimberly Bergalis contracted AIDS gathered worldwide attention when she accused her dentist - Dr David Acer - of giving her the fatal disease. Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concluded that Acer did indeed infect at least six of his patients, many challenged the accuracy of the investigation. In this examination of the situation, Mark Rom poses a number of unanswered questions that surround the case. Was the CDC's investigation accurate? Was their final analysis swayed by political pressure, influenced by public hysteria and hindered by bureaucratic red tape? And, if Acer did infect his patients, why isn't the CDC doing anything about it?

From Library Journal Despite its provocative title, this work is a thoroughly researched investigation of the case of Kimberly Bergalis and several other patients who apparently were infected with HIV by a Florida dentist during the late 1980s. The author, who served as principal investigator of the U.S. General Accounting Office's study of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's handling of this case, concludes that the agency did a good job, although the actual mode of transmission of the virus remains uncertain. The book discusses such thorny issues as confidentiality for both patients and healthcare providers and the difficulty of proving cause and effect in scientific research. The latter is an especially important concept for consumers, who, bombarded with health news in the popular media, might make decisions about their own health based on scanty scientific evidence. Because the incident in question occurred several years ago, readers might not find the book as compelling as they might were the story fresher. Nevertheless, it is recommended for public libraries. Linda Gleason, Univ. of Medicine Dentistry of New Jersey Lib., Newark Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s Using as his case in point the well-known Kimberly Bergalis incident--in which a dentist was suspected of having infected Bergalis and several other patients with the AIDS virus--Rom probes deeply into the question of how public health policy is made. As the principal investigator of the Government Accounting Office's inquiry into the federal Centers for Disease Control's handling of this case, Rom expected to find that the CDC had made major mistakes. Instead, he found the the agency to have been both competent and thorough. The author (Government and Public Policy/Georgetown Univ.) explores the reasons for criticism of the CDC's role by the media and by advocates of both patients' and health-care workers' interests. While finding that the HIV-positive dentist, David Acer, had indeed infected Bergalis and other patients, the CDC admitted that it was unable to determine how, and without this knowledge, it was hard-pressed to develop a policy aimed at preventing future incidents. After looking at the CDC's consideration of such issues as mandatory testing of health-care workers, practice restrictions, and patient notification, and its eventual development of some rather nebulous guidelines, Rom turns to the response of Congress and the actions by state legislatures, regulators, and courts. Their actions, he finds, have produced a mixture of ambiguous and contradictory rulings. The CDC, he concludes, is the proper agency for making health policy regarding HIV and medical personnel. However, it should have brought together advocates on all sides--patients, health-care workers, medical experts--and engaged them in seeking a common interest. Rom skillfully points out what that common interest is--improving the safety of both patients and health-care providers--and how focusing on competence rather than HIV status benefits both sides. Despite the provocative title, there's no sensationalism here- -just solid research and the calm and persuasive voice of reason. -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "Fatal Extraction gives us an inside look as to how a single dentist, a single patient, a single disease, and a single agency were used to make public policy for an entire country. Strict rigors of scientific investigation did not always apply, but critical scientific thinking allowed the correct decisions to be reached." M. Joycelyn Elders, M.D., former U. S. Surgeon General "All will be challenged to more fully acknowledge that the practice of public health is in part a political process." Kristine M. Gebbie, DrPh, RN, first national AIDS policy coordinator "This work is a thoroughly researched investigation of the case of Kimberly Bergalis and several other patients who apparently were infected by HIV by a Florida dentist during the late 1980's...It is recommAnded for public libraries.