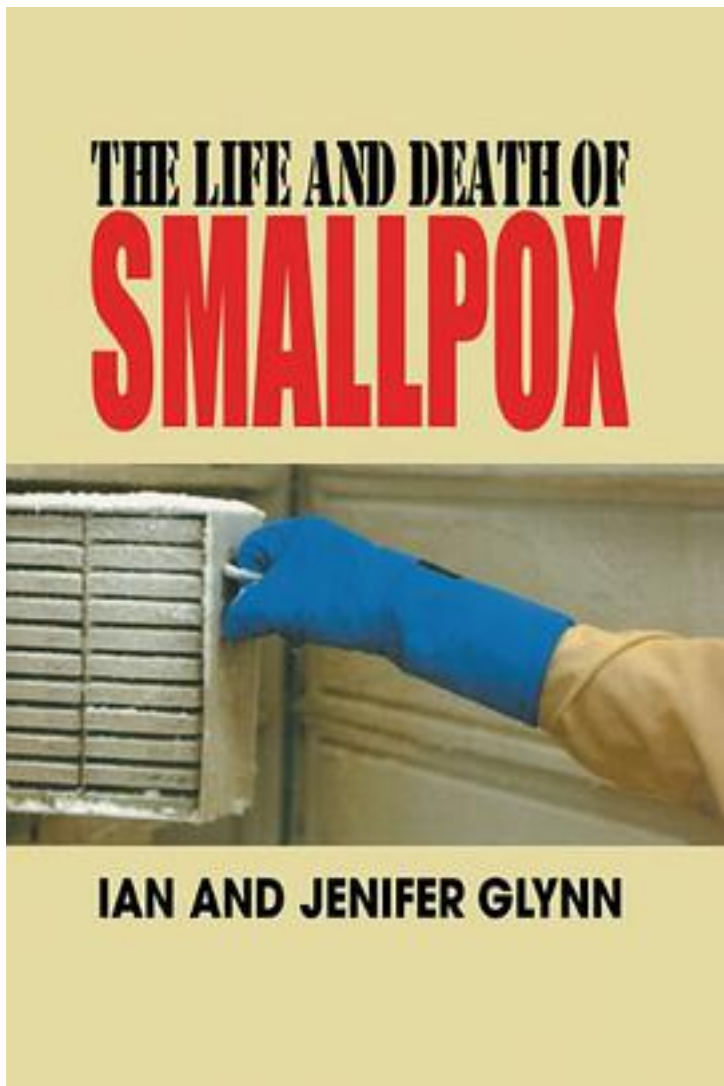


The Life and Death of Smallpox



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著者:Ian Glynn

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This is an engaging and fascinating story of a conditional human success story. Smallpox has been one of the most devastating scourges of humanity throughout recorded history, and it is the only human illness to have been eradicated, though polio may soon follow it to official extinction through human agency. However, while smallpox is officially extinct in nature, literally tons of the virus remain in guarded storage in Russia and at Fort Detrick in the US. Our fears that smallpox may return as a weapon of bioterrorists have led to the stockpiling of vaccine, and continuing vigilance, even though the official victory over smallpox is now 15 years old. The Life and Death of Smallpox presents the entire engaging history of our struggle and ultimate (?) victory over one of our oldest and worst enemies. The story of the campaign to track down and eradicate the virus throughout the world - the difficulties, setbacks, and the challenges successfully met - is a highlight of a fascinating book, but we can't be confident of the ending. The final chapter of the book clearly and authoritatively explains the current status of the threat, from the deliberate release of smallpox or other potential agents of biological terrorism.

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