

## Infectious Disease

### A Very Short Introduction

By Marta Wayne and Benjamin Bolker

#### Questions for Thought and Discussion

- How should we balance response to disease crises such as outbreaks, with investment in health infrastructure that could prevent outbreaks? Does your answer depend on whether you are thinking about your own country or another one, and if so, why?
- How do infectious diseases differ from other diseases?
- What infectious disease are you most afraid of? Why?
- What infectious disease are you most likely to be exposed to? How, and why?
- What is the last infectious disease that you had? Do you know how and where you contracted it? Do you know if you passed it on to anyone else? Had you tried to do anything to prevent it? Did you try to reduce your symptoms or shorten your infectious period? How?
- Has your position on vaccination changed after reading this book?
- What diseases are emerging right now? Are they similar to any of the case studies discussed in the book? How do they differ?
- How has the response to infectious diseases changed over history?
- How can we use evolutionary principles with current or ancient genomes to understand the origin and history of infectious diseases?
- Under what circumstances, if any, do you feel that it is appropriate to impose disease control measures (isolation, quarantines, vaccination) on individuals for their own good or for the good of the public?
- Where does infectious disease come from?
- What are the trade-offs between managing diseases through human behaviour change vs. biomedical approaches (vaccination, treatment) vs. modifying the environment?
- What are the trade-offs between managing disease by closing the encounter filter (quarantine, isolation, hygiene) vs. the compatibility filter (vaccine, prophylactic treatments)?

#### Further reading

- *ProMed Mail* (<http://www.promedmail.org/>), a highly reputable “Internet-based reporting system dedicated to rapid global dissemination of information on outbreaks of infectious diseases”
- Combes, Claude. *Parasitism: The Ecology and Evolution of Intimate Interactions*. Translated by Isaure de Buron and Vincent A. Connors. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2004)
- Alan Whiteside, *HIV/AIDS: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford University Press 2008)

- Rodolfo Saracci, *Epidemiology: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford University Press 2010)
- Quammen, David. *Spillover: Animal Infections and The Next Human Pandemic*. (New York, NY: WW Norton, 2013)
- Piot, Peter. *No Time to Lose: A Life in Pursuit of Deadly Viruses*. (New York, NY: WW Norton, 2013)