

Epidemiology

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*1st edn, (xxiv) + 600 pp, paperback with extensive illustrations, Oxford, Oxford University Press, RRP: \$83.95, 2011. ISBN: 9780195573893.

The field of epidemiology is a science and it remains “one of the many contributors to guiding action” in public health.¹ The field is crowded with published books with over 9500 books of varying publication dates on a recent Amazon.com search.² However, few of these books are relevant to the Australasian context and none appear to be recent. The 1st edition of *Epidemiology* fulfils the need for a reference textbook in this field relevant to the region and one which will no doubt establish itself as one of the leading reference textbooks in Australasia in the field of epidemiology.

Epidemiology is presented as a 600-page A5 publication that would fit easily into the briefcase or carry bag. It contains a table of Contents, a List of Figures, a List of Tables, a Preface, Acknowledgments, a Table (Find your level: From introduction to beyond the basics”, 14 chapters, seven Appendices, and a comprehensive Index. There is no foreword, bibliography, glossary, or list of abbreviations. There are however explanations of key terms throughout the textbook. The primary target audience of *Epidemiology* would be students, particularly postgraduate students, and health professionals throughout Australia. It would also be a useful resource for any school or library in the health sciences area and a core reference for any school of public health.

Chapters include “1. What is Epidemiology?”; “2. Disease Concepts in Epidemiology”; “3. Identification of Disease - Diagnostic Tests and Screening”; “4. Measures of Disease Frequency”; “5. From Research Topic to Research Hypothesis”; “6. Quantitative Descriptive Study Designs”; “7. Experimental Designs”; “8. Observational Designs”; “9. Sources of Bias”; “10. Sampling Strategy and Sample Size Calculation”; “11. Quantitative Methods of Data Collection”; “12. Statistics with Confidence”; “13. Ethical Considerations”; and “14. How to Read and Write Scientific Publications”. Of particular interest to students and teachers of epidemiology would be

the locally drawn case studies and critical thinking exercises (answers given on a separate page). Needless to say, well-known historical examples, such as that described by John Snow, are also given. The chapter on “Ethical Considerations” (Ch. 13) is refreshingly well developed and helps to round off the attractiveness of the textbook to clinical researchers. Details of the authors are given on the back cover. Both are Associate Professors in the School of Public Health, Tropical Medicine and Rehabilitation Sciences, James Cook University.

The consistent and concise style ensures that *Epidemiology* is easy to read. Given that this is only the first edition of the *Epidemiology*, it is a remarkably mature reference textbook, which is a credit to the authors, reviewers and publishers. *Epidemiology* has little competition within the Australian context, although there are numerous textbooks in this field internationally. Some recent examples of other international textbooks of epidemiology targeting different groups have been reviewed elsewhere.^{3,4} *Epidemiology* will certainly appeal to those undertaking research in the health sciences in Australasia, particularly those who do not already use a similar textbook or those who wish to include a local work in their reference portfolio. The cost is not prohibitive for clinicians and other health staff, and the *Epidemiology* is sure to become an important addition to the exclusive international portfolio of standard textbooks in the area of epidemiology.

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Declaration of Interests

The authors of *Epidemiology* are staff members in the same School as the reviewer. The reviewer did not participate in the production of this textbook.

References

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3. Haveman-Nies A, Jansen SC, Oers JAM, van ‘t Veer P. *Epidemiology in Public Health Practice*. 1st edn. Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2010 (Reviewed in *Am J Epidemiol* 2011; 174: 871-872).
4. Bhopal R. *Concepts of Epidemiology: Integrating the Ideas, Theories, Principles and Methods of Epidemiology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008 (Reviewed in *Ch Dis Inj Canada* 2011; 21: 180-181.)