

Web Table 1: definitions of epidemiology retrieved from 70 epidemiology textbooks

Ref	Year	Definition
1	1931	The science of the infective diseases—their prime causes, propagation and prevention
2	1956	The field of medical science which is concerned with the relationships of the various factors and conditions that determine the frequencies and distributions of an infectious process, a disease, or a physiological state in a human community
3	1957	The study of health and disease of population and groups in relation to their environment and ways of living
4	1960	The study of the distribution and determinants of disease prevalence in man
5	1961	The science of the objective laws underlying the origin, spread and decline of infectious diseases in human population groups and of the prophylaxis and eradication of these diseases
6	1963	The study of the laws governing the distribution of disease in the community
7	1970	The study of factors determining the occurrence of disease in populations
8	1970	The study of the distribution and determinants of disease frequency in man
9	1970	The study of disease distributions and the factors that influence them
10	1973	The study of the factors determining the frequency and distribution of disease in human populations
11	1973	The study of distribution and determinants of states of health in human populations for the purpose of prevention, surveillance, and control of health disorders in populations
12	1974	The study of the distribution and determinants of diseases and injuries in populations
13	1974	The study of disease occurrence in human populations
14	1975	The basic science of preventive and community medicine
15	1976	Methods and strategies used to identify and study that which determines the level and distribution of health and disease in the community

Ref	Year	Definition
16	1979	The study of the distribution and determinants of disease in human populations
17	1980	The study of the distribution and dynamics of disease in populations
18	1982	The study of health and illness in human populations
19	1984	The provision of preventive and curative services using modern epidemiologic technics in assessing health needs of population groups, the setting of priorities, and the assessment of results achieved
20	1985	The discipline of how to study the occurrence of phenomena of interest in the health field
21	1986	The study of variation in the occurrence of disease, and the reasons for that variation
22	1986	The study of the occurrence and distribution of disease and other health-related conditions in populations
23	1987	The study of the distribution and determinants of disease frequency in human populations
24	1990	The science of occurrence of diseases in human populations
25	1994	The study of the distribution of a disease or a physiological condition in human populations and of the factors that influence this distribution
26	1994	The study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events in specified populations, and the application of this study to control of health problems
27	1995	The study of disease occurrence
28	1996	Concerned with the distribution and determinants of health and disease, morbidity, injuries, disabilities, and mortality in populations
29	1998	The investigative method used to detect the cause or source of diseases, disorders, syndromes, conditions, or perils that cause pain, injury, illness, disability, or death in human populations or groups
30	2000	Formulating study designs to provide unbiased evidence for testing hypotheses by applying methods for gathering and using data from populations or groups of people

Ref	Year	Definition
31	2000	The study of the distribution and determinants of states of health in populations
32	2001	The study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events in specified populations, and the application of this study to control of health problems
33	2002	The study of the distribution and determinants of disease frequency, or, put even more simply, the study of the occurrence of illness
34	2003	The study of how often diseases occur in different groups of people and why
35	2003	The study of the distribution and determinants of disease frequency in human populations and the application of this study to control health problems
36	2004	The study of the distribution of disease and its determinants in human populations
37	2005	The study of the distribution and determinants of disease in human populations
38	2005	The science that focuses on the occurrence of disease in its broadest sense, with the fundamental aim to understand and to control its causes
39	2005	The study of the distribution and determinants of diseases within human populations
40	2005	The study of disease occurrence in human populations
41	2006	The study of the distribution and determinants of diseases in populations
42	2006	The study of the distribution and determinants of states of health in populations
43	2007	A broad-based population science, drawing on many disciplines from biology and sociology to biostatistics and philosophy of science, which investigates the causes of human disease and methods for their control
44	2007	The study of factors that determine the occurrence and distribution of disease in a population
45	2007	The study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events in human populations and the application of this study to the control of health problems.

Ref	Year	Definition
46	2008	The study of the frequency and determinants of morbidity and mortality in populations
47	2008	The study of the distribution of health-related states and events in populations
48	2008	The science and craft that studies the pattern of diseases (and health, though usually indirectly) in populations to help understand both their causes and the burden they impose
49	2008	The study of the distribution, determinants, and deterrents of morbidity and mortality in human populations
50	2008	The science and practice that describes and explains disease patterns in populations, and puts this knowledge to prevent and control disease and improve health
51	2009	The study of the distribution of health needs, including disease, impairments, disability, injuries, and other health problems in human populations and the factor contributing to their emergence, severity, and consequences
52	2009	The study of the distributions and determinants of states of health in human populations
53	2009	A combination of knowledge and research methods concerned with the distribution and determinants of health and illness in populations and with contributors to health and control of health problems.
54	2009	The study of how disease is distributed in populations and the factors that influence or determine this distribution
55	2010	The study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events in human populations and the application of this study to the prevention and control of health problems
56	2010	The study of health and disease in populations
57	2010	The methodology to obtain information on the distribution in the community of diseases and their determinants, eg, according to characteristics of time, place, gender, age and often occupation
58	2010	The object of research, to identify determinants that change the occurrence of health phenomena in human populations
59	2011	The study of the distribution and determinants of health states or events in specified populations, and the application of this study to control health problems
60	2011	The study of factors affecting the health and illness of populations

Ref	Year	Definition
61	2011	The study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events in specified populations and the application of this study to the control of the health problems
62	2012	The science of the distribution of diseases and other healthrelated features in human populations and of the factors that influence this distribution
63	2012	The study of the distribution and determinants of health and illness in populations
64	2013	The methodological discipline providing principles and practical guidelines for creating new quantitative evidence relevant for clinical and community medicine
65	2013	The study of the distribution and determinants of health and disease in populations
66	2013	The study of the distribution and determinants of disease and other health states in human populations by means of group comparisons for the purpose of improving population health
67	2014	The study of the occurrence and distribution of health-related events, states, and processes in specified populations, including the study of the determinants influencing such processes, and the application of this knowledge to control relevant health problems
68	2014	Concerned with the occurrence, distribution and determinants of health-related states or events (eg, health and diseases, morbidity, injuries, disability, and mortality in populations
69	2014	The science of understanding the causes and distribution of population health so that we may intervene to prevent disease and promote health
70	2014	The study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events (including disease), and the application of this study to the control of diseases and other health problems
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Web Figure 1: Word cloud illustrating the definitions of epidemiology in 70 textbooks published between 1931 and 2014

**We extracted the definitions from 70 epidemiology textbooks published between 1931 and 2014 (Supplementary Table 1). We removed stop words and words appearing 2 times or less.**

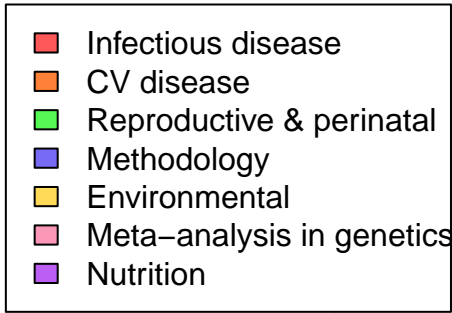
Web Figure 2: Top 100 burst words over 1974-2013

**The temporal bar graph shows each burst word as a horizontal bar from the start to the end of the burst. The bar width is proportional to the intensity of the burst. Bars are color-coded according to the major epidemiology topics, as previously. Uncolored bars correspond to burst words that did not belong to any particular cluster.**

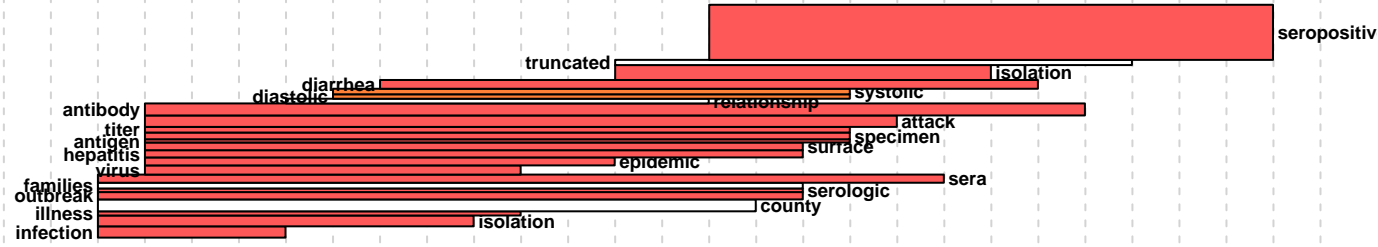
Web Figure 3A-3E: Mapping and clustering of terms in 6 high-impact general medicine journals for A) 1974-1989, B) 1990-1995 C) 1996-2001 D) 2002-2007 and E) 2008-2013

**We retrieved articles most likely of relevance to the field of epidemiology by using a custom search filter. The maps show terms as labeled nodes. Node size is proportional to the term frequency of occurrence (the larger the node the more articles include the term). Terms that are far away from each other do not or almost not occur together in the same article, while terms with high co-occurrence are close to each other. The clustering of the terms is displayed on top of the map by coloring nodes based on the cluster to which they belong. Clusters of terms are interpreted as major epidemiology topics and clusters located close to each other in the map indicate related topics.**

knowledge frequency  
determine morbidity  
problems states  
study  
population  
events causes illness mortality science  
injuries occurrence groups  
influence control methods health  
determinants specified  
disease factors  
prevention application  
community human  
healthrelated  
distribution



1970 1975 1980 1985 1990 1995 2000



ender

2000 2005 2010 2015

