

Reviews in Epidemiology: diversity in the research agenda

This issue of *Cadernos de Saúde Pública/Reports in Public Health* (CSP) is a continuation of the initiative started in 2008 to offer our readers an annual supplement featuring reviews in epidemiology. In 2008, the supplement was launched during the 7th Brazilian Congress of Epidemiology and the 18th IEA World Congress of Epidemiology, held in September in the city of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul (*Cad Saúde Pública* 2008; 24 Suppl 4).

The quantity and quality of articles submitted to CSP for the journal's regular review section, including theoretical essays, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses, provide the basis for our effort to publish an annual supplement in this thematic area and bear witness to the vigor of the respective Brazilian research. At present, we can still not guarantee that this yearly initiative will be confirmed over time, but there is no doubt that it represents a key trend in epidemiology in many countries. The questions addressed by contemporary epidemiology are increasingly complex and subtle. They demand redoubled efforts, and whenever possible they should include populations from diverse social and cultural contexts. Such characteristics are central to contemporary social epidemiology and are associated with more refined analytical methods that allow evaluating possible complex associations that incorporate the biological, clinical, and psychosocial dimensions of human health-disease processes.

The thematic range of reviews in current Brazilian epidemiology can be verified in this supplement, which includes various articles not only on communicable and non-communicable diseases, but also on other health problems in addition to clinical epidemiology. The latter are part of a broader context of interactions between individuals and social groups with certain social configurations and environments, whether natural or subject to clear anthropic pressure, as in the case of the magnetic fields associated with long-distance high-voltage power transmission lines.

Other reviews selected for this supplement extend beyond the analysis of specific health problems to include broader public health issues like gender, aging, and stressful life events. Meanwhile, epidemiology has interacted successfully with other disciplines, like health economics, and has focused on analyses of various aspects of clinical practice itself, including the urgent need to evaluate medicine rigorously and minimize its adverse and unwanted effects, as in the analysis of iatrogenic practices.

In addition to measuring health problems and evaluating their possible associations with biological and daily living variables, contemporary public health researchers have also targeted their efforts on fostering and carefully evaluating initiatives in the field of prevention and health promotion, such as encouraging active, non-sedentary lifestyles and balanced eating.

We thus hope that this annual initiative by CSP will continue in the future, aimed at epidemiology attuned to different complex and dynamic societies and with contributions by diverse sciences and practices, which have experienced an expansion in new knowledge in recent years.

Francisco I. Bastos

Editor of Review Articles

*Instituto de Comunicação e Informação Científica e Tecnológica em Saúde, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.
francisco.inacio.bastos@hotmail.com*

Mario V. Vettore

Editor

*Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.
mario@ensp.fiocruz.br*