This special issue of Revista Brasileira de Epidemiologia addresses one of its lines of action promised since its first issue, in April 1998; that is, the permanent discussion of the most relevant elements of the endemic-epidemic process of the most prominent conditions in our epidemiological scenario. Such terms indicate the extension of the task, which obviously is not limited to transmissible diseases, and not even to those included in this issue of RBE. Moreover, this editorial line does not end in this issue, and Rita Donalisio will remain as our Special Guest Editor to continue the series, with new diseases and/or to resume the debate related to those included in this first issue. Other lines, referring to chronic and degenerative diseases, accidents, violence and other problems will be dealt with in other special issues.

When the Editors entrusted Rita Donalisio with this task, they were confident she would accomplish it with the competence everyone acknowledges in her. And they were not wrong. Enjoy your reading and we are expecting contributions along the same line to start the debate.