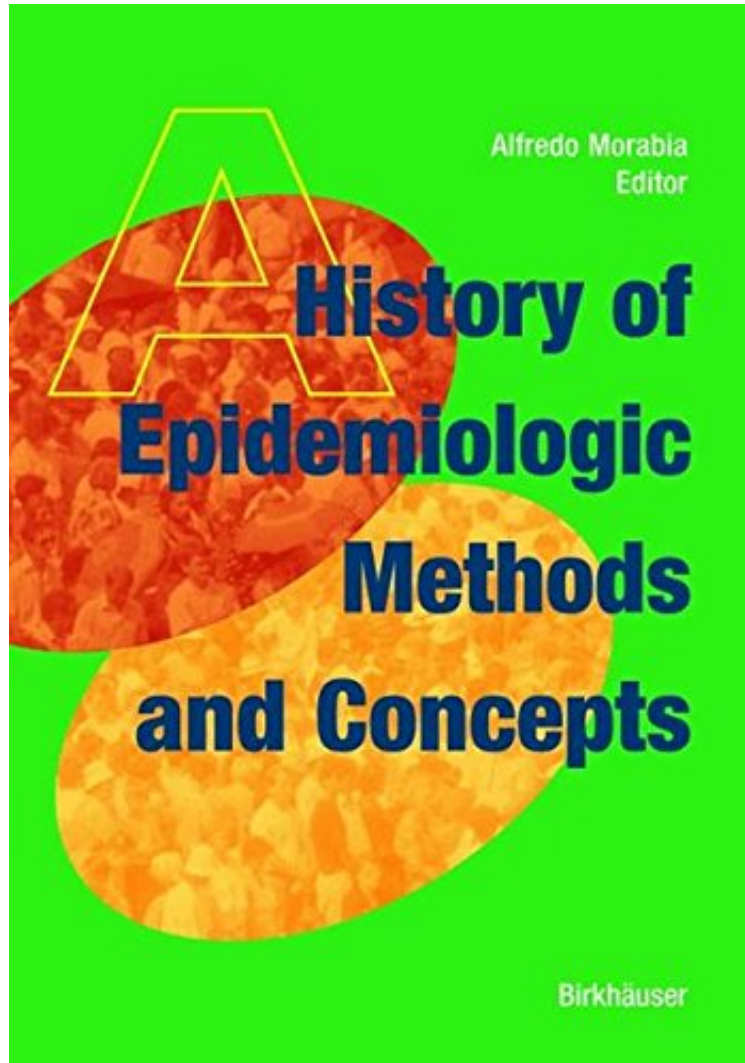


A History of Epidemiologic Methods and Concepts

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From Birkhuser : A History of Epidemiologic Methods and Concepts before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A History of Epidemiologic Methods and Concepts:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Deserves six starsBy John S. Marr MDThis is an extraordinary contribution to the epidemiologic literature. It is destined to become required reading for students in public health and an invaluable resource for those immersed in epidemiologic methods and concepts. Although the price is a bit heady, it should be in every medical school and school of public health library. Readers should examine the chapter titles, their authors, and the contents of these chapters (on), to get a glimpse of the book. It is a book that is unlikely to become dated or irrelevant in the decades to come. Six stars!6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. History of

Epidemiologic Methods and Concepts By Gene R. Pesola
Book Review: History of Epidemiologic Methods and Concepts. Editor Alfredo Morabia. For the connoisseur of epidemiology this textbook is a delight with fascinating vignettes of different prominent figures and their contribution to the origins and evolution of epidemiology and its methods. Contributors include many prominent figures currently active in the field as well as budding and fledgling epidemiologists. The book describes changes in a major field of study, in this case epidemiology, as related to a) the changing definition of epidemiology from a study of infectious disease processes only to the current consideration of any health process, b) changing qualifications needed in the past and present to be an epidemiologist c) and the evolving concept of what is a cause d) and the evolving concept of the case-control and cohort study. In addition, the book makes a brief and interesting case as to what constitutes an epidemiologist today relative to someone who is bright and can rattle off many of the concepts without actually taking many formal courses. Through it all, the pervasive nature of epidemiology as a study related to public health and its improvement can be noted from genesis to the present. This is consistent with the idea that epidemiology is a study of populations and group comparisons in contrast to the physicians focus on the individual. The book is divided into two parts. The first half of about 125 pages is devoted to the editor's overview of the history of epidemiologic concepts and methods. The concept of the case-control study design as considered through the eyes of the cohort study is particularly informative and reminds us that the cohort study is often conceptualized from the perspective of the more idealized randomized clinical trial. The randomized clinical trial is then often conceptualized from the perspective of the more idealized counterfactual. The author discusses many other topics including the origin of population thinking and comparison of groups, both concepts needed before epidemiology could advance at all to a formal science. The second half of the book is a collection of papers by prominent past and current epidemiologists that discuss risks, rates, the history of confounding and bias, the history of the case-control and cohort studies, vital statistics and review briefly eight 20th century textbooks on epidemiology. This section adds further flavor to the continuing evolution of knowledge in epidemiology and reminds us that epidemiology in the not too distant future will probably be much different in many ways from what it is currently. All in all, this book is a great read for those interested in the history of epidemiology, those interested in the evolution of study design concepts related to the case-control and cohort study, and those interested in the evolution of many concepts in epidemiology such as bias, confounding, risks, rates, etc. The ecologic study design, the cross-sectional study, and the randomized controlled study are not covered in this text. Gene R. Pesola, M.D., M.P.H. Associate Attending Medicine (Section of Pulmonary/Critical Care) Harlem Hospital/Columbia University New York, N.Y. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A history of Epidemiologic Methods and Concepts By Herman van Oyen This book is not just a new book on epidemiology or on epidemiologic methods. It is a first book of its kind, which focuses on the evolution of methods and concepts in epidemiology. The work of past epidemiologist is not only revisited with a modern perspective but especially with openness for the future. The clear and critical presentation of the concepts will be enjoyed by young and senior epidemiologists alike. The book is in part the result of a workshop held in Annecy, France in 1996, entitled 'Measuring our scourges'. The papers presented there comprise Part II of the book. Part I is an extensive essay by the editor. Although clearly related to the papers, the introductory essay can be read and used independently. In Part I (125 pages), A. Morabia develops three key avenues of thought: 'population thinking' and 'group comparison' as the two main pillars of epidemiology, and the set of concepts related to the identification of causes of disease (design, confounding, bias, interaction, causal inference). The first two chapters focus on these principles of epidemiology. The genesis of epidemiology is described next, and links are made to Piaget's genetic epistemology and to the evolution of physics. The last chapter attempts to structure and classify the evolution of epidemiologic thinking over time. This book on the history of epidemiologic methods and concepts not only focuses on the past but also argues persuasively that understanding the development of their methodological tools can help modern epidemiologists answer future public health questions better. The book will be very useful in teaching epidemiology, especially if, as stated in the preface, additional information including historical datasets will be made available on the [...]. Herman Van Oyen MD, DrPH, MPH, DTMH Unit of Epidemiology Scientific Institute of Public Health Brussels, Belgium

Methods, just as diseases or scientists, have their own history. It is important for scientists to be aware of the genesis of the methods they use and of the context in which they were developed. A History of Epidemiologic Methods and Concepts is based on a collection of contributions which appeared in "SPM International Journal of Public Health", starting in January 2001. The contributions focus on the historical emergence of current epidemiological methods and their relative importance at different points in time, rather than on specific achievements of epidemiology in controlling plagues such as cholera, tuberculosis, malaria, typhoid fever, or lung cancer. The papers present the design of prospective and retrospective studies, and the concepts of bias, confounding, and interaction. The compilation of articles is complemented by an introduction and comments by Prof. Alfredo Morabia which puts them in the context of current epidemiological research.

Morabia's essay is fascinating. He is one of the very few practicing epidemiologists with a deep interest in the history

of epidemiologic methods. The particular combination of his interests gives a special credibility to his essay, which describes how epidemiologic thinking has developed from the 18th century around two key ideas: concepts concerned with populations and group comparisons the hallmarks of modern epidemiology. (Bulletin of the World Health Organisation) Morabia's approach is didactic, combining historical snippets with lessons on epidemiology. (American Journal of Epidemiology) one of those few books whose reading is pleasantly unavoidable Very likely to become one of the most important epidemiological books published in the present decade. (European Epidemiology Federation) Morabia's approach is not only highly educational, but also a gripping read and should fascinate everybody who is concerned with epidemiology, public health, or history of medicine. Furthermore, this book will certainly be inevitable for teachers and students of public health since it offers a great variety of educational material for courses in medicine and epidemiology. Taken together, this book is highly valuable and will hopefully soon become a modern classic. (Biometrics)