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Morabia, A., University Hospital, Geneva, Switzerland (Ed.)

# A History of Epidemiologic Methods and Concepts

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Part II: Collection of papers on the history of epidemiological methods and concepts

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- Comments on the paper "On prognosis" by William Farr: a forgotten masterpiece

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. Most of them are derived from a workshop on the history of epidemiology entitled "Measuring our scourges", held in Annecy, France, in 1996. 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. The volume provides useful material for courses dedicated to history in the teaching curriculum of epidemiology scholars.

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