Descriptive Epidemiology: Person, Place, Time

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter the reader will be able to:

● state the three primary objectives of descriptive epidemiology
● provide examples of the main subtypes of descriptive studies
● list at least two characteristics each of person, place, and time, and provide a rationale for why they are associated with variations in health and disease
● characterize the differences between descriptive and analytic epidemiology
● describe the difference between secular trends and cohort effects

*Refer to Appendix E for a term paper evaluation form.

Study Questions

Instructions: Fill in the blanks with the terms below. Some of these terms may be used more than once.

acculturation analytic case clustering case reports (counts) case series cross-sectional studies cyclic fluctuations descriptive secular trends spatial clustering temporal clustering
1. ____________ studies characterize the amount and distribution of disease within a population. (p. 158)
2. ____________ studies explore the determinants of disease—the causes of relatively high or low frequency of diseases in specific populations. (p. 159)
3. ____________ studies generally precede ____________ studies: The former are used to identify any health problems that may exist, and the latter proceed to identify the cause(s) of the problem. (p. 159)
4. The three approaches to descriptive epidemiology are ____________, ____________, and ____________. (p. 162)
5. ____________ are increases and decreases in the frequency of diseases and health conditions over a period of years or within each year. (p. 218)
6. ____________ refer to gradual changes in the frequency of a disease over long time periods, as illustrated by changes in the rates of chronic diseases. (p. 220)
7. ____________ refers to an unusual aggregation of health events grouped together in space or time. (p. 221)
8. Concentration of cases of disease in a particular geographic area is the definition of ____________. (p. 222)
9. Postvaccination reactions (adverse reactions to vaccines), such as the development of jaundice among military personnel vaccinated for yellow fever, and the development of puerperal psychoses illustrate ____________. (p. 222)
10. The ____________ hypothesis proposes that as immigrants become acculturated to a host country, their health profiles tend to converge with that of the native-born population. (p. 188)