

Free essay on epidemiological studies

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Discussions of ethics as they relates to the epidemiological studies

Epidemiology is the basic science of the public health and study of how often diseases arising in different groups of people and why. In order to achieve health for all, the World Health Organization has set out the social objectives that require knowing the frequency, distribution, and evolution of the diseases. Its objectives are also aiming at knowing their causes and factors that can direct to prevention to their emergence and development.

Epidemiology deals with the application of the study to enhance health prevent disease and curb its consequences.

Under the epidemiological research, it applies methods and certain scope that is continuously expanding its potential to collect, store and use individual or communities' data. It has gone along with predictable tension between the rights and freedom of the individual or the community. This tension is what had led to a societal concern over the risks of abuse and demand the ethical issues involved to be considered. The HIV/AIDS pandemic disease and the clinical trials on the vaccines and treatment of the HIV candidate had sparked so much to the need for the development of the special ethical guidelines to the epidemiology studies. Those ethical issues are monitored and examined by the National professional associations of epidemiologists and International Epidemiological Associations. The Conference of the Council for International Organizations of Medical Science (CIOMS) is a body which has chip-in to create international and interdisciplinary forums so that it will enable scientists and lay people share views concerning immediate topics under consideration without being

influenced by politics or administration. CISCO was formed in the year 1984, and it comprised of prominent multidisciplinary representatives across all the fields of discipline. They share views concerning scientific and technical issues which are based on advances in the field of biology and medicine together with their social, ethical, economics, legal and administrative impacts. The CISCO and the World Health Organization (WHO) collaborated in 1989 to develop epidemiological guidelines concerning the ethical issues in their studies. The two bodies have so far held several conferences and made a lot of changes to epidemiological ethics. The two bodies are trying to minimize the epidemiological moral ambiguities encountered in day-to-day epidemiology study and practice.

The CISCO had proposed four levels of the responsibilities and liabilities that must be adhered to by the epidemiologists. First, the technical epidemiology experts are required to give information that is factual and accurate as much as possible to the general public, policy-makers and planners, and programme managers. Secondly, epidemiologists as citizens to their respective countries have a duty to work for the good of those they served, and hence they are supposed to respects the values of the community and the country as a whole. Thirdly, since epidemiologists are implementing the socioeconomic and health programmers, they are required to aid in interpreting the health policy and in difficult decision-making choices. Finally, epidemiologists are required to be morally accountable just like any other human being. They are supposed to remain faithful to all humankind principles and values. It includes among other keeping professional confidentiality. The above four levels can be summarized into three elements

of ethics. These are:

- Respect of person: individuals or groups have the right to be informed and have the freedom to participate in epidemiological studies. The epidemiologists are required to safeguards information concerning the persons having impaired autonomy.
- Justice: epidemiologists are obliged to provide protection to the weak and maintain equity in terms of benefits and rights to all.

•Beneficence: epidemiologists are a must to provide benefits that surpass the cost or the harm (H Nakajima, 1991).

Epidemiology, therefore, is not a value-free, but it is composed of and reflects the traditions, cultures and customs from where it is research and practice.

References

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