

Epiville

Epiville, a learning tool developed specifically for Principles of Epidemiology (P6400), is a set of interactive web-based exercises created by faculty in the Department of Epidemiology and produced by the Center for New Media Teaching and Learning at Columbia University. The primary goal of Epiville is to provide an enhanced web-based learning environment so that students can most efficiently master the main principles of the course. Separate modules serve as weekly homework assignments. In these exercises, you will assume the role of an intern at the Department of Health in the fictional city of Epiville where you will investigate a series of emerging public health problems. As you begin your investigation, you will gather relevant data including TV and radio reports, information materials from the Epiville Department of Health, and interviews with local residents. You will then use the information you have collected to address key analytic and theoretical questions. Each week's assignment is intended to complement material from course lectures, reading assignments and seminar discussions by simulating the hands-on experience of applying epidemiologic methods.

We believe that the tools employed in Epiville-- instantaneous answers to multiple-choice questions, use of interactive maps and visuals, and open-ended questions for discussion in seminar meetings --will contribute to improving your capacity to collect and analyze epidemiologic data and, ultimately, to your ability to carry out independent work in the field.

The project currently consists of ten modules. The first module introduces you to epidemiological thinking and evaluation of cause and effect. The following two modules on infectious disease epidemiology focus on an investigation of an epidemic of SARS. The next four exercises demonstrate how various other study designs can be used to search for the cause of an outbreak of a mysterious new disease, Susser Syndrome. Exercises on bias and confounding show how these threats to the validity of epidemiologic

research were tackled in a real-life study. The final module introduces the concepts of screening and prevention.

Finally, please begin each week's homework by reviewing the learning objectives for the assigned exercise and then following all steps to complete the assignment.