



Fundamentals of Genetic Epidemiology

By Muin J. Khoury, Terri H. Beaty, Bernice H. Cohen

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With continued progress in mapping and sequencing of the human genome, and increasing recognition of the role of genes in disease etiology, there is a need for a more sophisticated approach to the investigation of the causes of complex chronic diseases. This text integrates the principles, methods and approaches of epidemiology and genetics in the study of disease etiology. After a brief historical overview of genetics and epidemiology and their gradual rapprochement, the authors define the central theme of genetic epidemiology as the study of the role of genetic factors and their interaction with environmental factors in the occurrence of disease in populations. They describe fundamental research strategies of genetic epidemiology including population and family studies. Among the former are the study of the distribution of genetic traits and the role of nonspecific genetic indicators (such as inbreeding and admixture) in the occurrence of diseases. Among the latter are the analysis of familial aggregation of disease and its causes by epidemiologic methods as well as techniques of formal genetic analysis (variance components, segregation and linkage analysis). Finally, the authors discuss the increasing applications of genetic epidemiology in preventive medicine, public health surveillance, and the emerging ethical issues regarding use of genetic information in society.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Gives the first serious exposition [of genetic epidemiology] as an aspect of epidemiology. Geneticists will find it an appealing introduction to epidemiologic terms and concepts, while epidemiologists should find common ground even in developments traditionally far outside their discipline. .

. . this is a book that should be in the library of every genetic epidemiologist and should be considered as a text." --Journal of Genetic Epidemiology

"Excellent. The explanation of the logic of quite sophisticated statistical techniques of data analysis is excellent. This readable book provides a reliable summary of all but the most recent work in the overlapping areas of human genetics and human epidemiology. It should be purchased and used by all those undertaking population or family studies of human disease. It will also be a useful reference book for teachers preparing course on the subject." --R.N. Currow, American Journal of Epidemiology

"Does a very good job of introducing the field of genetic epidemiology....One interesting feature....is the way the authors weave the separate fields of genetics and epidemiology together to highlight the contribution of each to genetic epidemiology....Covers a variety of important topics well, at a level readily accessible to geneticists, epidemiologists, and statisticians. One very useful feature is the extensive reference list to work in genetic epidemiology....A very good introduction, and overview of, an increasingly important field." --Statistical Methods in Medical Research

About the Author

Muin J. Khoury is at the Center for Disease Control. Terri H. Beaty and Bernice H. Cohen are both at Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health.

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