A Pocket Guide to Epidemiology

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Springer

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Preface

Four years ago (2002), I (DGK) authored a unique educational program, *ActivEpi* (Springer Publishers), developed in CD-ROM format to provide a multimedia interactive "electronic textbook" on basic principles and methods of epidemiology. In 2003, the *ActivEpi* **Companion Text,** authored by myself (DGK), KM Sullivan and ND Barker and also published by Springer**,** was developed to provide a hard-copy of the material contained in the *ActivEpi* CD-ROM. The CD-ROM contains 15 chapters, with each consisting of a collection of "activities" including narrated expositions, interactive study questions, quizzes, homework questions, and web links to relevant references on the Internet.

In the nearly three years since the publication of the *ActivEpi* CD-ROM, we have received several suggestions from instructors of introductory epidemiology courses as well as health and medical professionals to produce an abbreviated version that narrows the discussion to the most "essential" principles and methods. Instructors expressed to us their concern that the material covered by the CD-ROM (and likewise, the Companion Text) was too comprehensive to conveniently fit the amount of time available in an introductory course. Professionals expressed their desire for a more economically time-consuming version that would conveniently fit their "after hours" availability.

To address these suggestions, we have herewith produced **A Pocket Guide to Epidemiology** which provides a much shorter, more "essential" version of the material covered by the *ActivEpi* CD-ROM and Companion Text. We realize that determining what is "essential" is not a simple task, especially since, from our point of view, the original CD-ROM was already restricted to "essential" topics. Nevertheless, to produce this text, we decided to remove from the original material a great many fine points of explanation and complicated topics/issues about epidemiologic principles and methods, with our primary goal a "quicker read".

A Pocket Guide to Epidemiology contains less than half as many pages as the *ActivEpi* Companion Text. We have continued to include in **A Pocket Guide to Epidemiology** many of the study questions and quizzes that are provided in each Lesson of the CD ROM, but we have eliminated homework exercises, computer exercises, and Internet linkages from the original CD-ROM. Nevertheless, we indicate throughout **A Pocket Guide to Epidemiology** how and where the interested reader can turn to the *ActivEpi* CD ROM (or the Companion Text) to pursue more detailed information.

We authors view **A Pocket Guide to Epidemiology** as a stand-alone introductory text on the basic principles and concepts of epidemiology. Our primary audience for this text is the public health student or professional, clinician, health journalist, and anyone else at any age or life experience that is interested in learning what epidemiology is all about in a convenient, easy to understand format with timely, real-world health examples. We believe that the reader of this text will also benefit from using the multi-media learner-interactive features of the *ActivEpi* CD ROM electronic textbook to further clarify and enhance what is covered in this more abbreviated (non-electronic) text. Nevertheless, we suggest that, on its own, **A Pocket Guide to Epidemiology** will provide the interested reader with a comfortable, time-efficient and enjoyable introduction to epidemiology.

About the Authors
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David G. Kleinbaum is a Professor of Epidemiology at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health in Atlanta, GA, and an internationally recognized expert in teaching biostatistical and epidemiological concepts and methods at all levels. He is the author of several widely acclaimed textbooks including, *Applied Regression Analysis and Other Multivariable Methods*, *Epidemiologic Research: Principles and Quantitative Methods*, *Logistic Regression-A Self-Learning Text*, and *Survival Analysis-A Self-Learning Text*.

Dr. Kleinbaum has more than 25 years of experience teaching over 100 short courses on statistical and epidemiologic methods to a variety of international audiences, and has published widely in both the methodological and applied public health literature. He is also an experienced and sought-after consultant, and is presently an ad-hoc consultant to all research staff at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

On a personal note, Dr. Kleinbaum is an accomplished jazz flutist, and plays weekly in Atlanta with his jazz combo, The Moonlighters Jazz Band.

Dr. Kevin M. Sullivan is an Associate Professor of Epidemiology at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health. He has worked in the area of epidemiology and public health for over 30 years and has over 80 publications in peer-reviewed journals and has published chapters in several books. Dr. Sullivan has used the *ActivEpi* Companion Textbook and CD-ROM in a number of courses he teaches, both in traditional classroom-based courses and distance learning courses. He is one of the developers of Epi Info, a freely downloadable web-based software package for the analysis of epidemiologic data published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He is also the co-author of OpenEpi, a freely downloadable web-based calculator for epidemiologic data (www.OpenEpi.com).

Ms. Nancy Barker is a statistical consultant who formerly worked at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She is an Instructor in the Career MPH at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University where she teaches a distance learning course on Basic Epidemiology that uses *ActivEpi* CD and *ActivEpi* Companion Text as the course textbooks. She also has been co-instructor in several short courses on beginning and intermediate epidemiologic methods in the Epi in Action Program sponsored by the Rollins School of Public Health.

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