

Terminology in Public Health

Name	Definition	example
<i>Epidemiology</i>	<i>is the study of the <u>distribution and determinants</u> of health-related states or events in specified populations, and the application of this study to the control of health problems</i>	-----
Health	A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or other infirmity	-----
Morbidity	Any departure, subjective or objective, from a state of physiological or psychological well-being.	-----
Infection	It is the entry, development and multiplication of an infectious agent in the body of man or animal. Note: it may be inapparent or manifest.	
Infectious disease	A clinically manifest disease of man or animal resulting from infection, OR it's the the entry, development and multiplication of an infectious agent in the body of man or animal	
Inapparent infection	The presence of infection in a host without occurrence of recognizable clinical signs or symptoms, the infection does not become manifest at any stage	
Communicable disease	An illness due to a specific infectious agent or its toxic products that arises through transmission of that agent from reservoir to susceptible host	
Contagious disease	An illness that is capable of being transmitted from one person to another by contact or close proximity	
Endemic disease	The constant presence of a disease or infectious agent within a given geographic area or population group; may also refer to the usual prevalence of a given disease within such area or group.	e.g. Bilharziasis in Egypt.
Epidemic	The occurrence of more cases of a disease than expected in a given area or among a specific group of people over a particular period of time	

Pandemic	An epidemic occurring over a very wide area (several countries or continents) at the same time and usually affecting a large proportion of the population	e.g. Influenza A H1N1 in 2009
Outbreak	A more or less localized epidemic affecting large number of a group, in the community	e.g. outbreak of food poisoning in an institution.
Sporadic	Cases occur irregularly, haphazardly from time to time and generally infrequently	
Nosocomial infection (Hospital-acquired infection)	An infection originating in a medical facility; e.g., occurring in a patient in a hospital or other health care facility in whom the infection was not present or incubating at the time of admission	
<i>Agent</i>	<i>A factor, such as a microorganism, chemical substance, or form of radiation, whose presence, excessive presence, or (in deficiency diseases) relative absence is essential for the occurrence of a disease.</i>	
Pathogenicity	The ability of an agent to cause disease after infection, the proportion of persons infected by an agent who then experience clinical disease	
Virulence	the ability of an infectious agent to cause severe disease, measured as the proportion of persons with the disease who become severely ill or die.	
Reservoir infection	The reservoir of an agent is the habitat in which an infectious agent normally lives, grows, and multiplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reservoirs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humans, animals, or the environment
Carrier	A person or animal that harbors the infectious agent for a disease and can transmit it to others, but does not demonstrate signs of the disease.	

Zoonosis	An infection or infectious disease transmissible under natural conditions from <i>vertebrate</i> animals to humans.	<u>Zoonotic diseases include:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brucellosis (cows and pigs), • anthrax (sheep), • plague (rodents), • rabies (dogs, bats and other mammals)
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Communicable period	The time during which an infectious agent maybe transmitted directly or indirectly from an infected person to another person or animal.	
Incubation period	The time interval from exposure to an infectious agent to the onset of symptoms of an infectious disease	
Pre-patent period	The period in people between time of exposure to parasite and the time when the parasite can be detected in blood or stool. It is equivalent to the incubation period of microbial infections	
Host	A person or other living organism that are susceptible to (can be infected by) an infectious agent under natural conditions	
Risk factor	An aspect of personal behavior or lifestyle, an environmental exposure, or a hereditary characteristic that is associated with an increase in the occurrence of a particular disease, injury, or other health condition.	
chemoprophylaxis	<p>The administration of a chemical, including antibiotics.</p> <p>Uses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- to prevent the development of an infection, or 2- the progression of an infection to active manifest disease, or 3- to eliminate the carriage of a specific infectious agent, or 4- to prevent its transmission to others. <p>Ex: aspirine or statins to delay the development of CAD</p>	
chemotherapy	The use of a chemical to treat a clinically recognizable disease or to limit its further progress	Ex: Methotrexate in cancer