



Forensic Epidemiology: Principles and Practice

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Determination of the cause of injury or disease is a pivotal issue in virtually all criminal and civil actions, and one that is often vigorously contested. Despite this fact, there are no widely accepted standards regarding what constitutes scientifically valid evidence of causation in a forensic setting, nor is there a systematic means of quantifying and weighing evidence of causation that is routinely followed. The single most prominent explanation for this situation is the fact that causation cannot be observed, and thus conclusions of causation are not observations but rather inferences based on a presumed degree of association (i.e. risk) between an exposure and injury.

In *Forensic Epidemiology: Principles and Practice* the authors present the legal and scientific theories underlying the methods by which risk is used in the investigation of individual causation. The discipline of forensic epidemiology (FE) is essentially a hybrid of principles and practices common to both forensic medicine and epidemiology. FE is directed at filling the gap between clinical judgment and epidemiologic data and methods in the evaluation of both general and specific (individual) causation in civil and criminal matters.

Forensic Epidemiology: Principles and Practice is aimed at the legal, forensic, and scientific communities involved in the evaluation of specific causal relationships, and includes the following topics:

- Historical perspective on how epidemiologic evidence of causation has been used in courts in the US and Europe
 - Theory and science underlying the use of risk to assess individual causation
 - Primer on epidemiologic methods, and various measures used to arrive at individualized comparative risk assessments and probability of cause (PC)
 - The use of statistical methods applied to publicly available data for ad hoc analysis of PC applicable to the specific circumstances of a case
 - Background on related forensic disciplines, including forensic pathology, death investigation biomechanics, and survival analysis
 - Examples of applied FE in the investigation of traffic injury and death, automotive and other product defect litigation, medical negligence, and criminal prosecution and defense
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- Provides historical perspective on how epidemiologic evidence of causation has been used in courts in U.S. and Europe
 - Presents the theory and science that underly the use of risk to assess individual causation
 - Acts as a primer on epidemiologic methods and the various measures used to arrive at individualized comparative risk assessments and PC
 - Covers appropriate background information on adjunctive disciplines, including forensic pathology, death investigation, biomechanics, and survival analysis

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