

PHILOSOPHY

THE EPIDEMIOLOGY CONTROVERSY EXPLAINED

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It is not easy to understand the major controversy in epidemiology right now. But there is great piece at [Boston Review](#) “Model versus Evidence”

In one camp are infectious disease epidemiologists, who work very closely with institutions of public health. They have used a multitude of models to create virtual worlds in which sim viruses wash over sim populations. ... A notable detractor from this view is Stanford’s John Ioannidis ... This talk of “biased evidence” and “evidence-based interventions” is characteristic of the evidence-based medicine (EBM) community, a close relative of clinical epidemiology. ... Public health epidemiologists and clinical epidemiologists have overlapping methods and expertise; they all seek to improve health by studying populations. Yet to some extent, public health epidemiology and clinical epidemiology are distinct traditions in health care, competing philosophies of scientific knowledge. Public health epidemiology, including infectious disease epidemiology, tends to embrace theory and diversity of data; it is methodologically liberal and pragmatic. Clinical epidemiology, by contrast, tends to champion evidence and quality of data; it is comparatively more methodologically conservative and skeptical.

I agree, they are more orthodox and not able to overcome the scepticism in their genes and therefore unable to cope with an emergent situation.

