



Epidemiology

(composed HSPH 1974)

Presented: NCRP Annual Meeting, March 2, 2009

Tune: Lemon Tree

Lyricist: John D. Boice, Jr., accompanied by Jack and Jennifer Boice

Verse 1

When I was young and quite naive
Laurie Taylor said to me
Take heed that you stay far away
From epidemiology

You'll find a table can fold four ways
The risk is relative
But odds are strong that you'll be wrong
In epidemiology

Chorus

Epidemiology's kind of silly
It don't mean skin disease
Your cohorts need controllin'
But don't attribute them to me
Epidemiology ain't too simple
New words are prevalent
Attack retrospective or are they incidence?

Verse 2

One day in epidemiology
My risks were none too high
Biased and confounded too
And even misclassified

I spent that day in complete dismay
With near morbidity
Twas clear the fact was what I lacked
Was strong causality

Chorus

Then I remembered what Laurie said ...

Verse 3

Now I've finished epidemiology
Rather it has finished me
I assessed when I should have ascertained
And ascertained unreasonably

Now I look back to just what I learned
And leave with you my fear
That epidemiology's a great big word
I hope I never hear*

Chorus

Everybody now ...

*(alt: With risks too great to bear)