
Does language matter? A case study of epidemiological and public health journals, databases and professional education in French, German and Italian.

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Epidemiology and public health are usually context-specific. Journals published in different languages and countries play a role both as sources of data and as channels through which evidence is incorporated into local public health practice. Databases in these languages facilitate access to relevant journals, and professional education in these languages facilitates the growth of native expertise in epidemiology and public health. However, as English has become the lingua franca of scientific communication in the era of globalisation, many journals published in non-English languages face the difficult dilemma of either switching to English and competing internationally, or sticking to the native tongue and having a restricted circulation among a local readership. This paper discusses the historical development of epidemiology and the current scene of epidemiological and public health journals, databases and professional education in three Western European languages: French, German and Italian, and examines the dynamics and struggles they have today.

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