

EPIB-641 Epidemiology 101 for Journalists



Department of
Epidemiology, Biostatistics
and Occupational Health



School of
Population and
Global Health

Instructor

Professor Madhukar Pai, MD, PhD
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Epidemiology 101 for Journalists

May 3 – 7, 2021
1-credit, online course for health & science journalists

Guest Faculty

Roxanne Khamsi, Independent Science Journalist
Vidya Krishnan, Writer & Nieman Fellow, Harvard University
Apoorva Mandavilli, New York Times
Maryn McKenna, Author and Independent Journalist
Andre Picard, Globe and Mail



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May 3 to May 7
Monday to Friday
09h00 to 11h45
(CRN 884)

Academic Credits: 1

Rationale for this new course:

The COVID-19 crisis has put health reporting on the front pages of all media worldwide, but has also raised big challenges with fast-tracked research that is often contradictory, compromised normal standards of scientific peer-review and dissemination, sensationalized media reporting, and confused policy makers making irrational decisions. All health and science journalists will benefit from understanding the fundamentals of epidemiology, so they can critically read medical research studies and media releases, and report them in an accurate and balanced manner.

Description:

This short, online course builds on a similar course offered to Indian & African health journalists, will introduce epidemiologic concepts to health/science journalists. The course will use topical examples from COVID-19, to cover issues such as types of

epidemiologic studies, how to measure disease frequency and risk, importance of bias and confounding, and review various common study designs, including observational studies and randomized trials. The main emphasis would be on how to critically read literature and how to report accurately.

Previous course materials can be seen

at: <https://www.teachepi.org/courses/epidemiology-for-health-journalists/>

Instructor:

Professor Madhukar Pai, MD, PhD

Canada Research Chair in Epidemiology & Global Health, McGill University, Canada

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Guest faculty:

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Requirement: Must be a journalist (including freelance journalists). A few spots will be open to journalism students, but the main focus will be on professional journalists who are currently reporting on the pandemic.

Expectations:

- Must be willing to invest time and able to participate in at least 80% of the lectures
- Must be willing to catch up on missed lectures by reviewing video recordings
- Must be willing to read and complete assignments
- Must be an active participant by asking questions & sharing experiences
- Take an entry and exit quiz/exam

How to apply:

Professionals and others not seeking academic credits are considered for enrolment as Professional Interest Students in the Summer Session. Professional Interest Students are expected to participate fully in course work, including assignments and examinations. Students will be informed of the grade obtained, but it will not be officially recorded by the university and no formal university transcript will be issued. Students will receive a certificate of participation from the Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health. Courses taken for Professional Interest cannot subsequently be applied to an academic program.

Permission of instructor:

In all cases, permission of the instructor is required for Professional Interests Students in order to register. Please contact the instructor with information on your journalism background and submit one writing sample. Be sure to include your full name, course title, and course number when emailing your request. Please send a copy of the permission email to gradadmin.eboh@mcgill.ca once it has been granted by the instructor.

Registration:

The registration form will be available starting February 15. Once the permission of the instructor has been obtained, **Professional Interest Students may register no later than two weeks prior to the start of the course(s)** they are registering for.

Please complete the **Registration Form**

Fees:

The course fees are \$1250.00 CAD (plus all applicable taxes).

Refund / Cancellation Policy

Participants can request a full refund, minus a \$100.00 CAD cancellation fee, up to one week prior to the start of the course(s) they are registered in. Professional Interest Students who register without first obtaining the permission of the instructor will be charged a \$100.00 CAD cancellation fee if permission is not granted subsequently.