

Publication of epidemiological literature concerning emerging infectious disease outbreaks

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Research published in *PLoS Medicine* this week by Weijia Xing and colleagues examines the publication of epidemiological literature concerning the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreaks in Hong Kong and Toronto. The research shows that the majority of the epidemiological articles on SARS were submitted after the epidemic had ended (22% submitted during the epidemic) with only 7% being published during the epidemic.

These findings show that although the academic response to the SARS epidemic was rapid, most articles on the [epidemiology](#) of [SARS](#) were published after the epidemic was over.

Outbreaks of emerging [infectious diseases](#), especially those of a global nature, require rapid epidemiological analysis and dissemination of information for which journals are just one channel. This paper suggests that journals alone are not sufficient.

The authors conclude by suggesting that to minimize future delays in the publication of epidemiological research on emerging infectious diseases, epidemiologists could adopt common, predefined protocols and ready-to-use instruments, which would improve timeliness and ensure comparability across studies. Journals, in turn, could improve their fast-track procedures.

More information: Xing W, Hejblum G, Leung GM, Valleron A-J (2010) Anatomy of the Epidemiological Literature on the 2003 SARS Outbreaks in Hong Kong and Toronto: A Time-Stratified Review. PLoS Med 7(5): e1000272. [doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000272](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000272)

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