

Glossary

acute: severe, intense, but typically short-lived

case fatality rate: the proportion of people with a particular disease who subsequently die from it

chronic: persisting or recurring over a long period of time

contagious diffusion: the spread of a phenomenon through interactions among individuals in close contact; diseases such as flu that spread by direct transmission spread in this way

critical geography: a movement within geography that incorporates a wide variety of philosophical approaches that share an interest in opposing inequitable or repressive power relations

degenerative diseases: health conditions that are characterized by a gradual breakdown of physiological function

demographic momentum: the potential for a population to continue to grow, despite declines in fertility, as a large young population moves into its child-rearing years

diffusion: the spread of something across space

double burden of disease: the coexistence of both infectious diseases and “diseases of affluence” in a population

expansion diffusion: the spread of a phenomenon outward from a source

fertility rate: the average number of children born per woman over her lifetime

germ theory: the idea that microbes invade human bodies and cause alterations that result in disease

hierarchical diffusion: the spread of a phenomenon through a spatial hierarchy, spreading to large settlements before small ones

immunologically naïve: lacking exposure to a particular pathogen

incidence rate: the number of new cases of a disease in a particular population over a specified time period per unit of that population, e.g., four diagnosed cases of tuberculosis per 1000 people in 2011

mortality rate: the average number of deaths in a particular population per unit of that population (often per 1,000 or 100,000 people) over a specified time (typically one year)

nosocomial infections: infections acquired in a hospital or hospital-like setting

prion: an infectious particle composed primarily of protein and containing no genetic material

prophylaxis: a measure taken to prevent, rather than cure, disease

relocation diffusion: the introduction of a phenomenon to a location outside its current range

second-line drugs: drugs that are used when the cheapest and most accessible therapies are no longer effective

virulence: the potential of a pathogen to cause disease; a virulent pathogen causes more severe symptoms

zoonosis: a disease of animals