



Why do you like being an epidemiologist?



Because I like a job that is not the same everyday. One day in the office on the computer, next day out visiting a hospital, next looking at a mosquito control program or on a boat collecting oysters...

Do you like the people you work with?

Yes epidemiologists are curious. They are always asking questions, they have been around, have talked to many people, they have often traveled to many places, they have many stories to tell.

Where did you start working?

My first job was in Vanuatu, small islands in the South Pacific where I was born. I worked to control malaria, leprosy, tuberculosis and filariasis (a worm disease that make your legs look like elephant legs).

Why did you become an epidemiologist?

At my first job, the most pressing need was in public health: going out in villages, doing population surveys, treating cases identified during the surveys, implementing preventive measures, training the health officers in the field... This was for me more interesting than working in the lab, so I switched to public health.

Were you able to move a lot as an epidemiologist?

Some epidemiologists stay in the same place all their career. But there are epidemiologists all over the world. After the job in Vanuatu, the whole family moved to Texas, then Louisiana, then Cameroon in Central Africa, then back to Louisiana, then to Saudi Arabia, then back to Florida, then North Carolina and finally back home to Louisiana.

Who makes a good epidemiologist?

Epidemiology is for people that are curious, that always are wondering how things work, that like to learn about new things, that like to be challenged, that are not afraid to be wrong and rethink what they thought they knew, that want to solve problems. Epidemiology is for people that want to have a fun and interesting life.

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What kind of degree do you need to be an epidemiologist?

Most epidemiologists have a degree in public health, a bachelor, a masters or a doctorate. Some also have some health related degrees: doctor, veterinarian, nurse, lab technician... Degrees do help open doors to good jobs but once inside, it is how you think, how to deal with people and how you solve problem that will be important.

Who employs epidemiologists?

Epidemiologists are employed by local or state public health departments, federal agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the US Department of Agriculture, hospital organizations, pharmaceutical industries, industries with occupational health programs, academic and research institutions, non governmental organizations such as Doctors without Borders, Care International...

Are epidemiologists making a lot of money?

Epiemiologists make a good living but very few make a lot of money. Here is a joke about epidemiologists: "Epidemiologists count sick people, they do not count money".