Welcome to Week 7!

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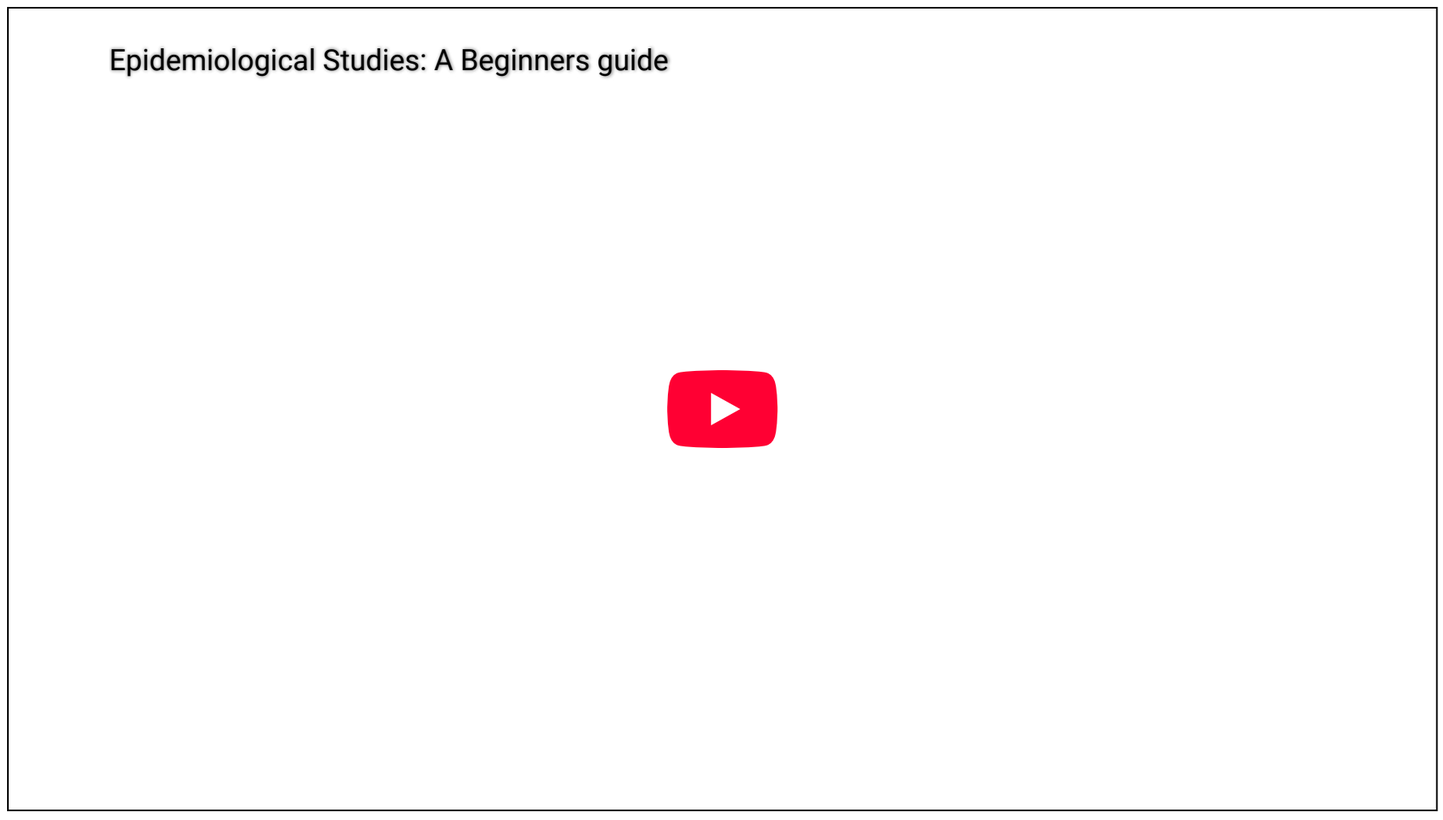
Two key measures of association in public health are the relative risk (RR) and odds ratio (OR). In order to understand the contexts they are used in it is important to have some basic knowledge in research designs for health research. The video below (9 minutes and 42 seconds) is a good summary of these designs.



In both the calculation of the relative risk and odds ratio, we look at exposed an unexposed groups of the disease. While the RR and OR can both use similar contingency tables to demonstrate this, they are actually calculated differently. The RR is used for prospective designs where the research requires that patients or participants are followed into the future. The OR on the other hand require designs that are retrospective where risk factors of the disease are identified by looking back at patients or participants medical history/hospital data. The distinguishing feature between the two measures of association is that RR is a ratio of probabilities where as OR is a ratio of two odds. We can use SPSS to calculate the RR and OR but in order to get the p-value, we need to use normal distribution tables (z-tables).