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Race and Epidemeology: the Strategy for the Construcción of Bological Differences

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Objectives: To highlight the ideological character of causal assumptions and epidemiological strategies which establish and strengthen racial differences in epidemiological studies.

Methodology: Analytical descriptive

Results: The author points out how epidemiology has been taken over by authority in a way that the scientific theory of racial differences in health is conformed or refuted by it. The author also highlights the ideological character of the epistemological assumptions and grounds that reaffirm and materialize racial differences in health.

The author notes that in epidemiological studies about disparities between whites and blacks, two scenarios predominate: one that indicates that the differences are of biological origin by genetic disposition and the other that the disparities are due to environmental exposures. To rebut the former premise, the author presents the arguments used by those who have challenged some interpretations of epidemiological findings on the topic and presents his proposals to overcome the limitations of causal hegemonic models, which do not integrate the determinants and social inequalities in health. Among the authors mentioned in this work, Jaime Breilh is highlighted for cases of social epidemiology and eco-epidemiology. Through his work he aims to understand how context affects the health of individuals and groups, creating a case for which the individual indicators are inadequate and fail to separate the biological body from the specifically sociocultural, economic and political contexts.

Conclusions: The author concludes that the disclosure of "black boxes" of epidemiology and his discourses on the ethnology of the diseases in specific racial groups not only serves to expose the limitations of biological determinism and statistic reductionism that permeate epidemiology, but are also useful to point out the ideological bias as well as the ethical and social implications of these models of societal intervention.