

Eco-epidemiology, as described by protagonists Susser and Susser (1996b ; Schwartz et al., 1999; Susser&Bresnahan, 2001), is a very precise concept, among the approaches to social epidemiology (Krieger, 2001). It has received a great deal of attention and seems to rally a large number of epidemiologists, at least among those who believe in the apogee of the current biomedical paradigm and who participate in the debate.

In short, **eco-epidemiology puts forward the need to consider both the dynamic aspect of phenomena and the interposition of all levels of causality, whether biological, physical, social or historical.**

The hierarchy of levels thus moves from the microscopic of the molecule to the macroscopic level of social institutions and even the planetary environment. A new figure of speech, that of the "Chinese box", was introduced to illustrate this idea of hierarchical levels, each containing a succession of more intimate levels (Susser &Susser, 1999). Schwartz et al. (1999) describe the key elements of eco-epidemiology as levels of organization, their interpenetration and the time axis.

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