Planetary Health for Primary Care

Course Manual
Introduction to the Course

Planetary Health was defined in the 2015 Rockefeller-Lancet Commission Report on Planetary Health as "the health of human civilization and the state of the natural systems on which it depends". The intricate and delicate relation that human health has with nature is increasingly becoming clearer as the Earth’s systems are degraded. Increase in the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases (GHG) such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) contribute to increase in climate extreme events, sea level rise, increased risk of infectious disease, food shortages and natural disasters such as floods and droughts. The far reaching effects of climate change and environmental degradation threaten human health and survival, particularly adding more pressure and burden to the more vulnerable populations, countries and health systems.

As family doctors, we are in a unique position to promote knowledge about Planetary Health and behavior changes, which can improve both individual and Planetary Health - the so called co-benefits - such as active transportation, low emission sources of energy and a more vegetable based diet in our patient communities. We must strive to integrate sustainability into our individual behavior, clinical practice, and in our meetings.

Throughout the course, we aim to explore how you as a health professional can make a difference - in your own life and in the lives of your patients. In 2020, we have experienced wildfires across the world, a rising sea temperature and a global pandemic COVID-19 which has brought health professionals to the forefront. Within the planetary health framework and through understanding the intersections of planetary health across multiple disciplines, we will explore the impact that climate has on our medical work as primary care physicians, and how we can advocate for urgent and essential action from our policymakers to continue to prevent further degradation of our planet Earth.

The importance of training family doctors in this topic is highlighted by the 2015 Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change, which concluded that: “anthropogenic climate change threatens to undermine the past 50 years of gains in public health”, and conversely, that a comprehensive response to climate change could be “the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century”.

Primary health care plays a very important role in identifying and ensuring education of the concepts and main health problems relating to climate change, to ensure that climate action will be achieved across the world. This course aims to add to the understanding of health in climate change within primary health care settings, by offering strategies to identify and deal with the global health issues. By the end of the course, participants are expected to be able to understand
and identify concepts of planetary health and the intersections between citizen action and government, human health and a healthy planet. The course also aims to identify evidence-based policies for management, mitigation and adaptation of climate change and the environment.

The WONCA Environment course was written collaboratively by many authors, committed family doctors and other health professionals from all regions of the world. You will see the different world perspectives united in this material.1,2

The course development was supported by a grant from WONCA (The World Organisation of Family Doctors), and led by the WONCA Working Party for the Environment (https://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/groups/WorkingParties/Environment.aspx), or to join the working Party (https://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/groups/WorkingParties/Environment/JoinEnvironmentWorkingParty.aspx).

Between now and 2030, humanity has an essential role in climate change that will decisively determine the course climate change and human development into the future. Throughout the modules, we will introduce case studies on various presentations of the links between climate change and health, and we would like you to write and reflect on the similarities and differences of management and diagnosis of these patients across the world within the planetary health framework. We aimed to make the course flow smooth and interactively.

The modules are designed to introduce family doctors and other primary health care professionals, to the topic of Planetary Health; and to inspire and guide them to educate others or become advocates in various ways.
About the Course

Primary health care plays a very important role in identifying and ensuring education of the concepts and main health problems relating to climate change are addressed, to ensure that climate action will be achieved across the world. This course aims to add to the understanding of health in climate change within primary health care settings, by offering strategies to identify and deal with the global health issues. By the end of the course, participants are expected to be able to understand and identify concepts of planetary health and the intersections between citizen action and government, human health and a healthy planet. The course also aims to identify evidence-based policies for management, mitigation and adaptation of climate change and the environment.

How you can take the course:
There are two ways that you can do this course. You can do it either as a whole or you can take the modules individually. For both streams, you need to first do the Introductory module and answer the participant profile.

The target audience is family doctors/practitioners from all parts of the world. The course is also free and available to community and individuals interested in the topic of planetary health.

Main aim:
Inform WONCA family doctors on the intersection between planetary health and human health in the context of Primary Health Care (PHC) through online modules.

Specific aims:
- Demonstrate the health impact of climate change.
- Educate primary care providers on issues of planetary health.
- Support reflections and discussions on planetary health.
- Propose evidence-based actions for primary care providers on acting on planetary health.

This online training course is a series of 7 modules (Table 1) on diverse aspects of planetary health which has been developed keeping in mind the current and future needs of family doctors from all parts of the world. Each module starts with related clinical cases and you will find the answers to unravel these cases as you go through the respective modules. To bring in an international perspective, these cases have been taken from different parts of the world. Links to related short videos and articles are placed wherever relevant. Moreover, links to lengthier videos and articles are also suggested for those who want to dive deeper into the topics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planetary Health &amp; Climate Change</td>
<td>An overview of climate change and planetary health. We will explore briefly the human contribution to climate change and provide an overview of important greenhouse gases and their main sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat health</td>
<td>Climate change is causing rise in average temperature around the world, climate change will result in more frequent climate extreme events like heat waves. You will find clinical evidence on how to care for a patient with heat stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Pollution and Planetary Health</td>
<td>The same substances in the atmosphere that are responsible for air pollution are also responsible for climate change and climate change will have a negative impact on air pollution; for example, by increasing incidences of forest fires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate-sensitive Infectious Diseases</td>
<td>Climate change and global rise in temperature will result in increased incidence of infectious diseases; for example, more floods will result in more water borne diseases and increased temperature will favor transmission of mosquito borne pathogens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health and Planetary Health: Take a minute for the planet</td>
<td>Mental health will be explored in the context of Anthropocene and the role of Primary Care professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Planetary Health</td>
<td>Climate extreme events and rise in temperature will threaten food production. Also, elimination of forest in favor of farmland has contributed to the expansion of desert areas and worsening droughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitigation, Adaptation and Advocacy</td>
<td>Health professionals are often recognized amongst the most trusted professionals in society. Their role in speaking about the health implications of climate change to the public and decision makers can be extremely influential in support of policies that promote planetary health.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before starting and after finishing each module, you must complete a test consisting of 7 objective questions. **Each reading module is 1 to 1.5 hours in length**; with interactive links to keep you engaged and recommended videos, lectures and articles. You will also have to answer all pre and post tests.

**Course registration**

- Access the link https://www.ufrgs.br/telessauders/documentos/step_by_step.pdf to learn how to register for the course’s teaching platform.
- After completing the first step, access the Moodle TelessaúdeRS-UFRGS through the link moodle.telessauders.ufrgs.br. Click on the course and enter the Tele@123 enrollment key. A final evaluation module and course satisfaction assessment.
- If you have already taken a course on this platform, just login with your username and password.
- If you have forgotten your username or password, send an email to ead@telessauders.ufrgs.br requesting your username and/or new password.
- To start the course, fill in your student profile and answer the pre-test. Both are located in the Welcoming week section.

**Course structure**

The course is self-instructional. It was planned so that the contents are self-explanatory. In this format there is no presence of tutors. The course has a total workload of 50 hours, consisting of ten modules, described below.

- An introductory module, with course menu, presentation video, registration and pre-test.
- Seven content modules, including compulsory activities, such as texts, videos and questionnaires, in addition to complementary materials. In the module you will find highlighted words, which are explained in the glossary at the end of each module.
- A final evaluation module and course satisfaction.

The student will be able to carry out the activities on the day and time that is most convenient, through his/her computer and internet.

The course will be fully accessible in distance learning mode through the Moodle TelessaúdeRS-UFRGS teaching platform. Classes will be available during the course period on this platform.
Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03 May 2021</td>
<td>Welcoming week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06 May 2021</td>
<td>Module 1 - Planetary Health &amp; Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 May 2021</td>
<td>Module 2 - Heat health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 May 2021</td>
<td>Module 3 - Air Pollution and Planetary Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 May 2021</td>
<td>Module 4 - Climate-sensitive Infectious Diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03 Jun 2021</td>
<td>Module 5 - Mental Health and Planetary Health: Take a minute for the planet</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Jun 2021</td>
<td>Module 6 - Food and planetary health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Jun 2021</td>
<td>Module 7 - Mitigation, Adaptation and Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Jun 2021</td>
<td>Final week</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The modules will be closed on 31 de December 2021. You should complete the activities for receive your certification until this date.

Evaluation

- The student evaluation process will involve objective questions at the end of each module, worth 1 point for each questionnaire. And the final evaluation, applied at the end of the course, which is worth 3.0 points, totaling 10.0 points at the end.
- The pre-test is mandatory for the release of the modules of the course, but it is not evaluated for points.
- The final grade will be the sum of the grade of the modules’ questionnaires with the final assessment.

Criteria for approval:

- Respond to all course evaluations.
- Obtain a final grade equal to or greater than 7.0.
Certification

The certificate will be available on the Moodle Teaching Platform as soon as all activities are completed and the participant obtains a score equal to or greater than 7.0. The participant is responsible for checking if the name filled in at the time of registration in Moodle is correct. To check if the name is spelled correctly or modify it, just follow these steps:

- Access the Moodle Teaching Platform https://moodle.telessauders.ufrgs.br;
- Click on your name (at the top right of the screen)> profile> modify profile (in the first information box);
- Correct the name in the “name” and “last name” boxes and click “update profile” at the bottom of the page;
- Access the course: the area to generate the certificate will be the last one on the scroll bar.

TelessaúdeRS-UFRGS does not print or send certificates by mail under any circumstances. The certificate is authenticated, free of charge and its authenticity can be verified through the link https://moodle.telessauders.ufrgs.br/mod/simplecertificate/verify.php

Basic requirements:

- For the student’s effective participation in the course, some prerequisites are necessary:
  - basic notions of informatics;
  - Internet access with a minimum of 512 kbps and a speaker or earphone;
  - availability for the course during the 12 weeks;
  - have the following software installed:
    - Flash Player (latest version available from the Manufacturer)
      http://get.adobe.com/br/flashplayer/
    - Java (latest version available from the manufacturer)
    - Adobe PDF Reader (latest version available from the Manufacturer)
      http://get.adobe.com/br/reader/
References:


Suggested citation for this course:

WONCA
This project was led by the WONCA (World Organization of Family Doctors) Working Party on Environment, with funding from WONCA.

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