



Foreword



Planetary health for family doctors

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We live in an age when human activities are the main driver of the environmental changes that threaten to undermine progress in human health. The prevention of future zoonotic events such as Covid-19 requires better understanding of how an animal virus jumped species boundaries to infect humans, with devastating impacts, and the role of environmental changes in increasing the risk of such events. The Covid-19 pandemic, has brought short term reductions in air pollution in some locations, and resulted in a reduction of about 7% in greenhouse gas emissions but without decisive action to decarbonize the economy such reductions will be rapidly reversed as economic stimulus packages are implemented. The implications of planetary level environmental changes for the health of populations around the world are becoming apparent and the burdens will often fall predominantly on those populations who have contributed little to greenhouse gas emissions and to the destruction of natural systems, increasing inequities in health and wealth.

There is much that can be done to support the development of more resilient and lower environmental impact health care systems and to support the wider transformation needed towards a 'net zero' economy. Primary care has a leading role to play in addressing the health threats posed by environmental change, ranging from direct effects of air pollution or extreme heat exposure, to impacts on nutrition from reduced crop yields, and increases in the transmission

of vector-borne or water and food-related diseases. Family doctors can also support behaviour changes towards more sustainable and healthy ways of living, for example through dietary change or the promotion of physical activity. This course is particularly timely and relevant because it both describes the pervasive threats to health from environmental change and also gives practical, evidence-based guidance on how primary care practitioners can support their patients to address the challenges and work with colleagues to transform health systems. It will become a landmark course for family doctors worldwide, and has been developed by a diverse group of family doctors and other health professionals, from all of the continents besides Antarctica. The development was led by Alan Abelsohn, Mayara Floss and Aoife Kirk, with funding from WONCA. Each module has been peer reviewed for technical content and high level reviewers from Africa, Asia and America have ensured appropriate scope and balance. We are indebted to all those involved for their commitment and vision in bringing the initiative to a successful conclusion. The authors and reviewers are listed with a short bio below.

The modules will be available free of charge and open access, via the Brazilian telemedicine platform, TelessaúdeRS. Great thanks to the whole team at TelessaúdeRS, from the design to programming, who decided to welcome this course, even without a specific budget for it, and operationalize it on their Educational Platform.



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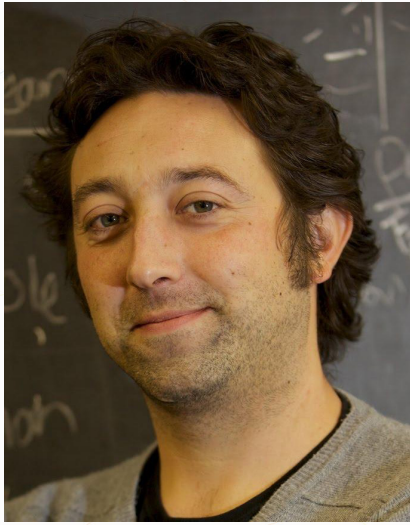
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