

## SUSTAINABLE HEALTHCARE EDUCATION

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### Learning Objectives for Medical Students

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#### *Introduction*

The GMC's Tomorrow's Doctors (2009) Outcomes for Graduates state that *"Medical students are tomorrow's doctors. In accordance with Good Medical Practice, graduates will make care of patients their first concern, applying their knowledge and skills in a competent and ethical manner and using their ability to provide leadership and to analyse complex and uncertain situations."*

Graduates have a duty *"to protect and promote the health of patients and the public"*, and are expected to *"recognise the role of environmental and occupational hazards in ill-health and discuss ways to mitigate their effects"* and to *"demonstrate awareness of the role of doctors as managers, including seeking ways to continually improve the use and prioritisation of resources."*

Global environmental change presents a fundamental threat to the health of patients and the public, requiring a response from health services which will call upon all the skills and talents of tomorrow's doctors. Addressing sustainability and complex global issues can help students to connect clinical experiences to social, political and environmental contexts, increasing their understanding of the role of doctors in society, and developing leadership and management capabilities.

#### *Further Information*

For more information please contact:

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These learning objectives and supporting resources may be accessed online via  
<http://greenerhealthcare.org/sustainable-healthcare-education>

## **Sustainable Healthcare Education**

### **Learning Objectives for Medical Students**

#### **1. Describe the benefits and challenges of sustainable healthcare**

- a) Explain the concept of sustainable development in relation to human health
- b) Describe, with examples, how an understanding of living systems can help in the design of more sustainable systems in healthcare
- c) Explore the ways in which the links between environment and health might affect the duty of the doctor to 'protect and promote the health of patients and the public'

#### **2. Recognise the role of climate change (as an environmental hazard) in ill-health and discuss ways to mitigate its effects**

- a) Describe the impact of climate change on health inequalities
- b) Understand the difference between adaptation and mitigation in climate change responses
- c) Explain the health co-benefits of policies to address climate change in a variety of sectors, including transport, food production, energy generation & use, population control, distribution of resources
- d) Explain how 'Contraction and Convergence' relates to ethical issues of distributive justice in health
- e) Critically appraise scientific evidence on the mechanisms by which climate change affects health (directly and indirectly)

#### **3. Explain the role of doctors as both managers and clinicians in the provision of sustainable healthcare**

a) Describe ways in which a sustainable healthcare system may differ from the NHS as it is today, giving examples of how doctors can help to bring about these changes in their role as managers of healthcare resources.

(Academy of Medical Royal Colleges' *Medical Leadership Competency Framework* competency areas: setting direction, improving services (inclusion of sustainability as an aspect of care quality), managing services (stewardship))

- b) Discuss the relationship between sustainability and quality of care in one medical speciality
- c) Demonstrate clinical skills applicable to sustainable healthcare, including:
  - use of evidence-based lifestyle interventions in disease prevention
  - describing ways in which patients may be supported to care for themselves
  - conduct of a remote consultation with a patient

d) Identify an opportunity to improve sustainability in your medical school or in a clinical setting and the channels by which change can be brought about.

#### **4. Demonstrate advocacy and leadership skills for sustainable healthcare**

- a) Discuss social and psychological aspects of environmental behaviour change (e.g. why and how people change or don't change)
- b) Informal advocacy: be able to discuss with colleagues whether or why individuals in the NHS should support sustainable healthcare
- c) Formal advocacy: Give a 10 minute presentation or write a letter to senior colleagues about NHS responsibilities and opportunities for sustainable healthcare
- d) Be aware of existing networks, and how to build a local network to support professional action to increase sustainability