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The Sustainability Agenda: is anyone listening?

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Background and Aim: Climate change and the potential subsequent health effects are a hot topic of international debate. Some have argued that the medical profession should respond through the provision of lower carbon-intensive healthcare. Family doctors are highly trusted and have the potential to influence clinical systems and patient behaviour. We therefore aim to explore the experience of, and attitudes towards, sustainability among the future generation of family doctors in England, Denmark and New Zealand.

Methods: We have designed an online survey influenced by previous attitudinal surveys towards climate change among healthcare professionals and the general public. We have created a Likert scale to determine attitudes and beliefs towards climate change, and multiple choice and free-text entry to capture personal experiences of sustainable healthcare activities. The layout of the questions is randomised where appropriate and aims to minimize any leading or prejudice. We sought advice on the survey design from academics and piloted the survey to a small cohort of GP trainees in Southern England and Copenhagen. The survey will be electronically distributed to 500 trainees in England with estimated numbers of 50 trainees in Denmark and New Zealand.

Results: We will present the results of attitudes towards sustainable healthcare and climate change, and compare these internationally. Additionally, we will present the results of the trainees' experiences of sustainable healthcare activities.

Conclusions: We aim to draw conclusions about the attitudes of GP trainees towards sustainable healthcare. We also hope to draw conclusions about any international differences of understanding about climate change and sustainable development. We hope the results of this study will influence syllabus design for GP training in the countries studied.