

Promoting Planetary Health: Family Doctors on the Frontline!

Dr Alice McGushin

27th International Conference

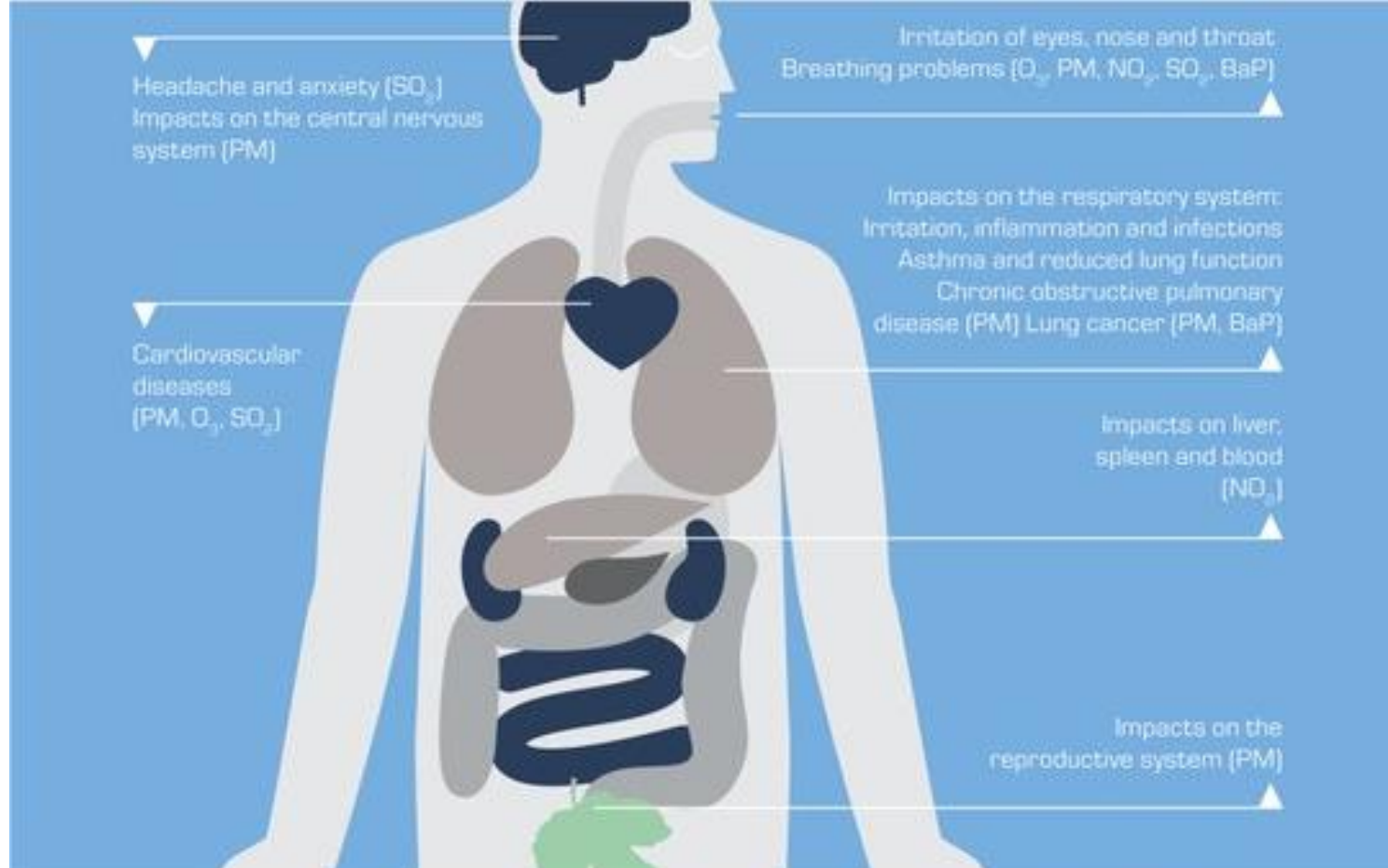
on Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services

Warsaw

31st May 2019

Outline

- Background
 - Air pollution and health
 - Climate change and health
 - Planetary health
- WONCA Working Party on the Environment
 - Air Health Train the Trainer Program
 - Declaration on Planetary Health



Particulate matter (PM) are particles that are suspended in the air. Sea salt, black carbon, dust and condensed particles from certain chemicals can be classed as a PM pollutant.

Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) is formed mainly by combustion processes such as those occurring in car engines and power plants.

Ground-level ozone (O_3) is formed by chemical reactions (triggered by sunlight) involving pollutants emitted into the air, including those by transport, natural gas extraction, landfills and household chemicals.

Sulphur dioxide (SO_2) is emitted when sulphur containing fuels are burned for heating, power generation and transport. Volcanoes also emit SO_2 into the atmosphere.

Benzo[a]pyrene (BaP) originates from incomplete combustion of fuels. Main sources include wood and waste burning, coke and steel production and motor vehicles' engines.

IMPACT OF AIR POLLUTION ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH

A child who is exposed to unsafe levels of pollution can face a lifetime of health impacts. Exposure in the womb or in early childhood can lead to:



Stunted lung growth
Reduced lung function
Increased risk of developing asthma
Acute lower respiratory infections



Impaired mental and motor development
Behavioral disorders



Low birth weight
Premature birth
Infant mortality

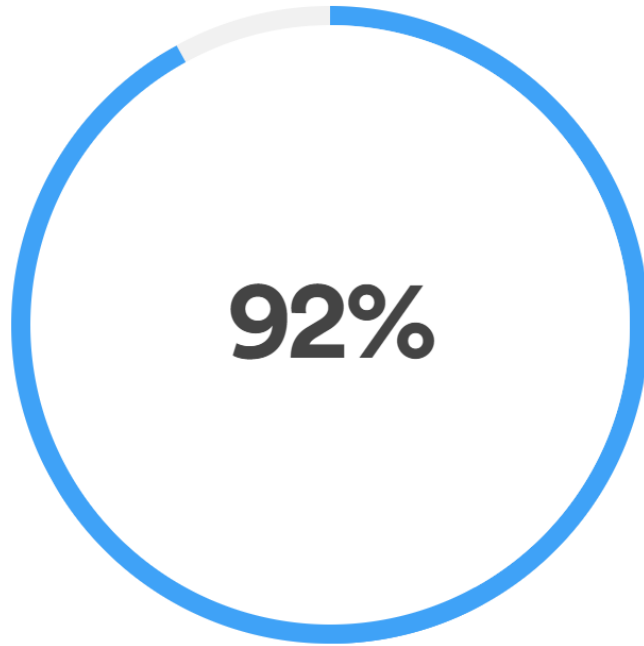


Childhood cancers

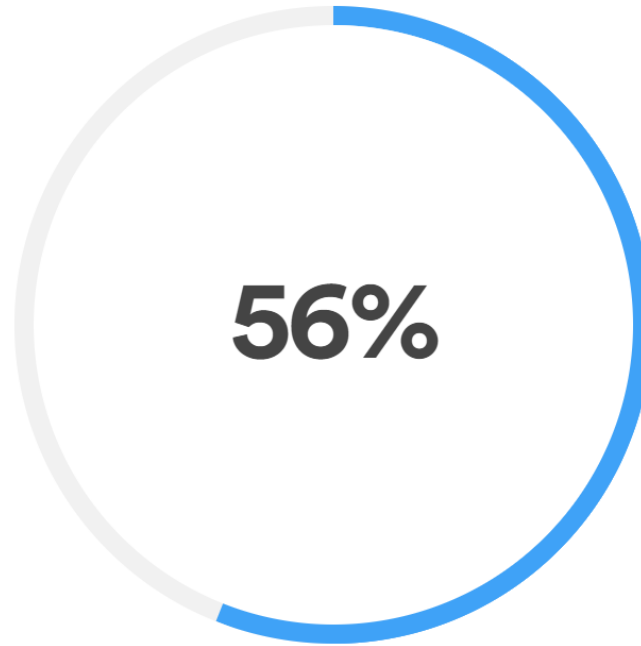


Increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and stroke in adulthood

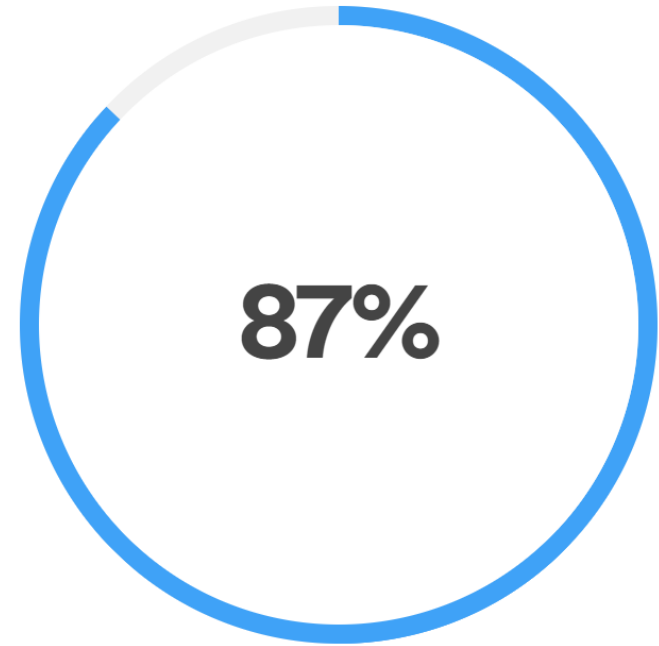




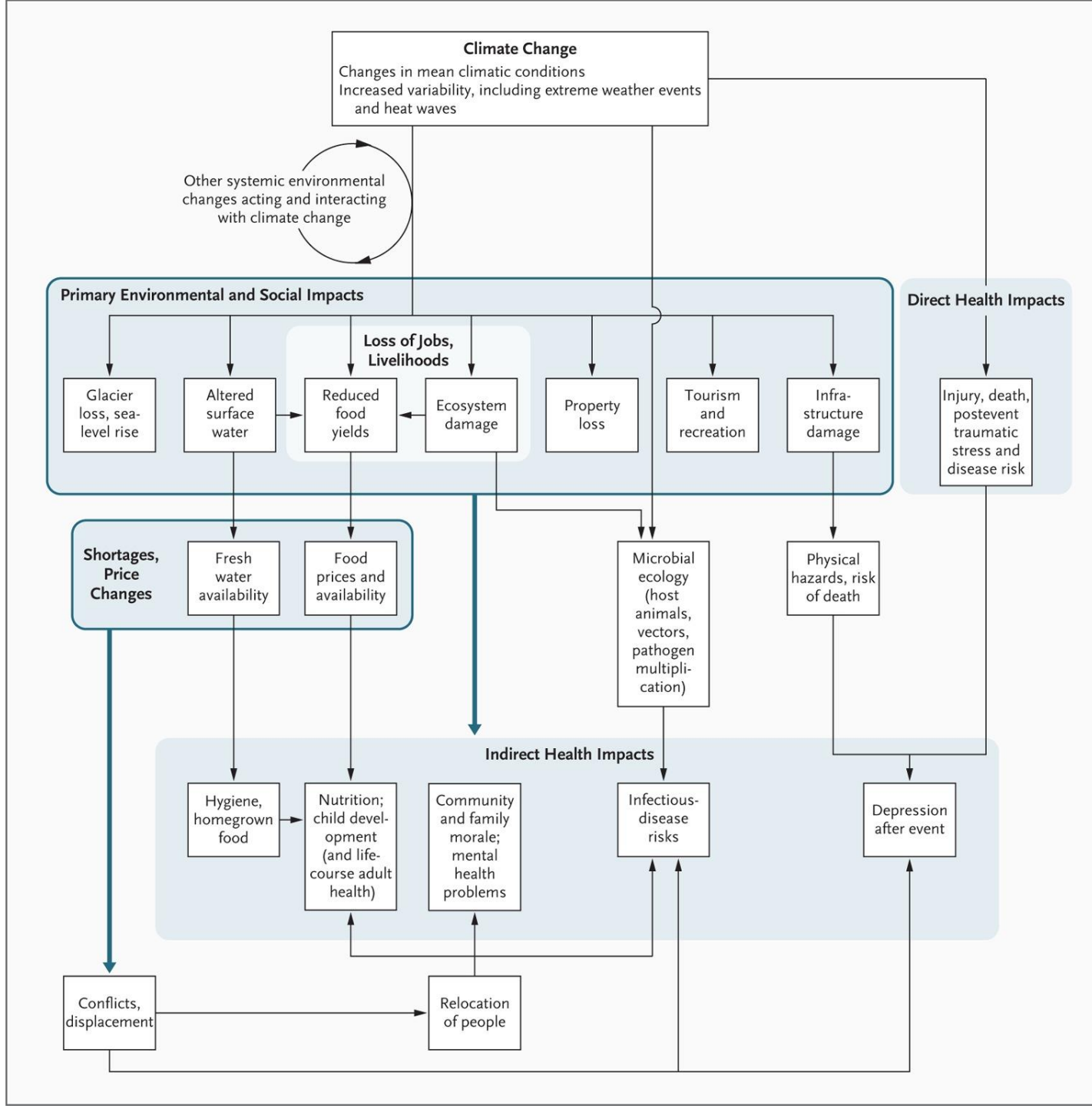
92% of the world's population, urban and rural, lives in places with air above WHO guidelines.

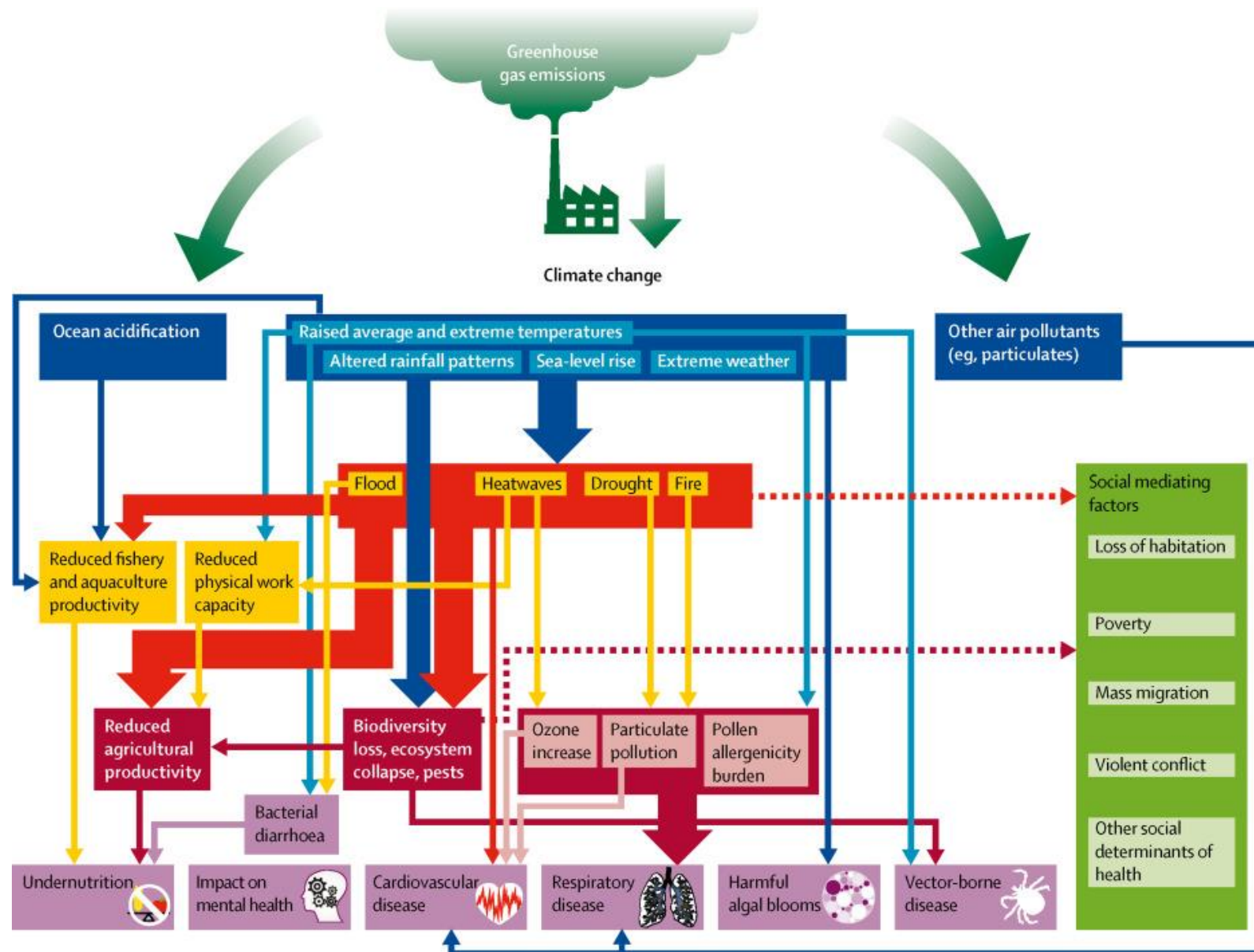


56% of cities and towns monitoring pollution locally have levels 3 ½ times or more above WHO guidelines.



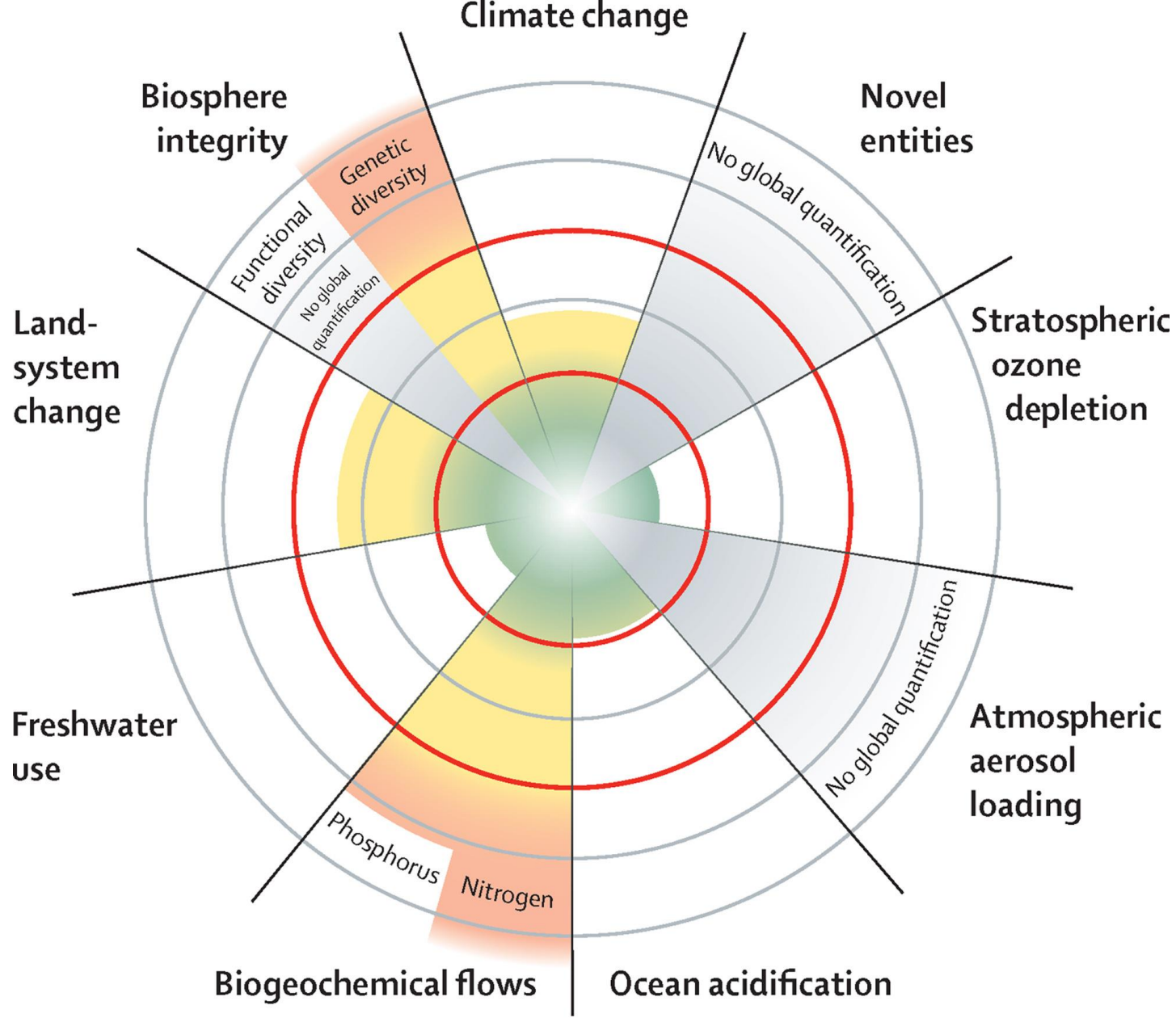
87% of deaths from outdoor air pollution occur in low- and middle-income countries.





Watts et al 2015

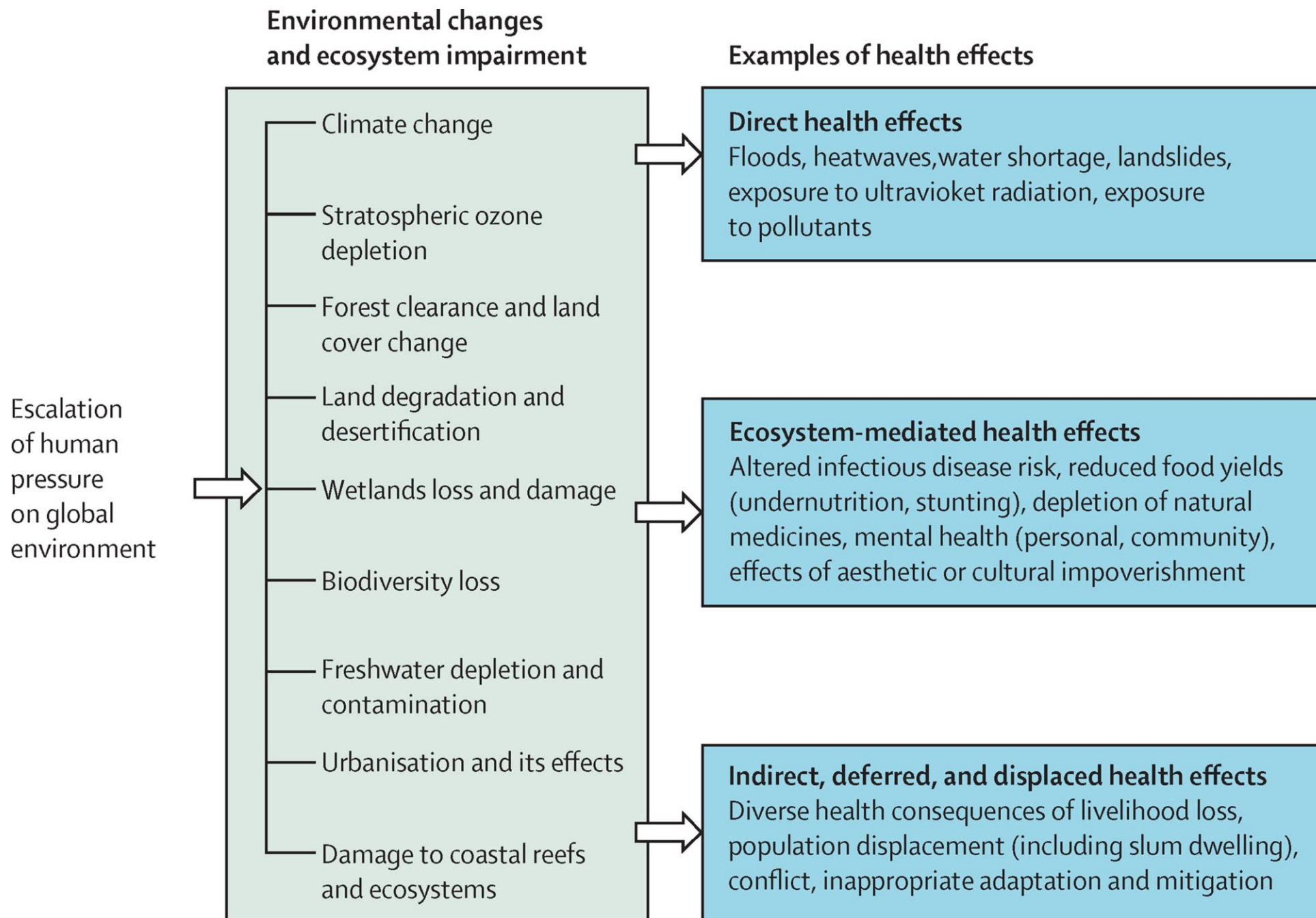




Beyond zone of uncertainty (high risk)
 In zone of uncertainty (increasing risk)

Below boundary (safe)
 Boundary not yet qualified

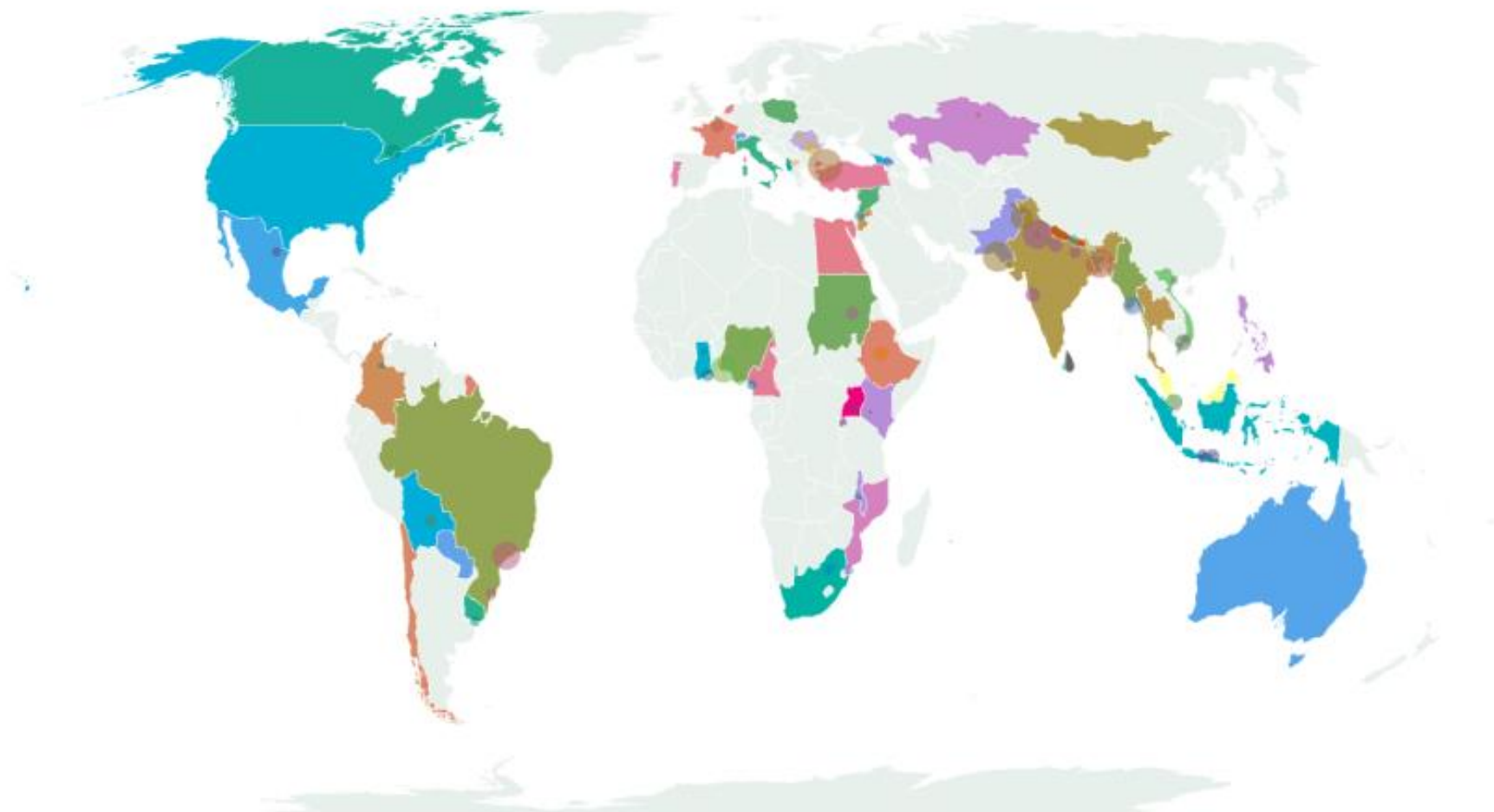
Whitmee et al 2015





WONCA Air Health Train the Trainer Program

- Aimed at health professionals in LMICs
- Participants are provided with the knowledge and tools to:
 - Understand effects of air pollution on health and the role of the healthcare practitioners and it's links to climate change;
 - Assess and counsel patients and provide outreach to communities;
 - Build capacity among healthcare professionals and the wider public in their communities, countries and regions through teaching and advocacy activities.
- Each trainer will:
 - Act as teacher and mentor, teaching students, residents, family doctors, nurses, paediatricians, respirologists, cardiologists and other healthcare practitioners, at local and regional meetings regarding Air Pollution and Health and climate change, and the role of primary healthcare practitioners;
 - Engage in any other activities, either teaching or acting as a champion or advocate, e.g. writing articles, advocating in the medical associations, to build capacity among health care professionals regarding air pollution and health in their countries and regions;
 - Educate patients and patient groups about environmental issues and health, and acting as a patient advocate whenever appropriate.



<https://public.flourish.studio/story/38085/>

The training component

- A 1.5 hour online course through University of British Columbia, on Air Pollution and Health
- A 1.5 hour online course through US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA): Particulate Pollution and your patient's health
- Online presentations from two of the leading world experts:
 - Planetary health, and its relationship to air pollution, including co-benefits Professor Andy Haines.
 - 3.2. Household Air Pollution from Solid Cook fuels and Its effect on Health (two short videos). Professor Kirk Smith.

The training component (continued)

- A 2.5 hour webinar with Dr Alan Abelson and Dr Alice McGushin, using remote teleconference facilities
 - Evidence on ambient and household air pollution and different health outcomes
 - Recorded presentations from:
 - the WHO Urban Health Initiative
 - the International Primary Care Respiratory Group “Fresh Air” project
 - Previous Air Health Train the Trainers speaking about activities they have undertaken

Activities

- Collaboration with engineers and scientists to build low-cost air pollution monitoring system (Porto Alegre, Brazil)
- Education project to assess knowledge and address knowledge gaps through innovative teaching and learning on the SDGs and the impact of the environment on children's health among school teachers and students aged 13-14 (Urugaiana, Brazil)
- Inclusion of air pollution in residency training course (Sauce, Uruguay)
- Painting competition on the theme of air pollution to be displayed on World Environment Day (Kathmandu, Nepal)

DECLARATION CALLING FOR FAMILY DOCTORS OF THE WORLD TO ACT ON PLANETARY HEALTH



“What can you do as a family doctor?”

1. Learn more
2. Communicate
3. Respond
4. Prepare
5. Advise
6. Lead by example
7. Be active
8. Get involved

Progress on the declaration

- Supported by a number of national family physician organisations
 - Canada, Australia, the Caribbean
- Multiple articles published

'You start somewhere': Raising awareness of planetary health

An RACGP program led to Dr Tammra Warby's role in creating an international educational document on planetary health.



Release of "A Call for Clinicians to Act on Planetary Health" - Lancet 2019

Irish Doctors for Environment stand together with other citizens across the globe in demanding change. On Earth Day we are delighted to be one of the 30 organisations, universities and associations to have signed on a Call to Clinicians to Act on Planetary Health published in the Lancet, one of the oldest and widely recognized medical journals.

"Join us in safeguarding our health and the health of future generations" - Lancet 2019

[A Call for Clinicians to Act on Planetary Health - The Lancet 2019](#)



Release of "Declaration Calling for Family Doctors to Act on Planetary Health"



Saúde planetária: conclamação para a ação dos médicos de família de todo o mundo

Planetary health: a call to action of family doctors from around the world

Salud planetaria: Llamada a la acción de los médicos de familia de todo el mundo

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Resumo

A WONCA, em conjunto com a Planetary Health Alliance, lançou uma conclamação para a ação dos MFCs do mundo pela saúde planetária. Este comentário discute os efeitos das mudanças ambientais e a conclamação em relação o papel do médico de família na perspectiva da saúde planetária.

News

Planetary health: WONCA urges family doctors to commit to action

BMJ 2019 ; 364 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.j1002> (Published 04 March 2019)
Cite this as: BMJ 2019;364:j1002

Article Related content Metrics Responses

Gareth Iacobucci

Author affiliations

WONCA (World Organization of Family Doctors) has issued a new declaration urging family doctors around the world to commit to acting on planetary health.¹

It lists several issues in which family doctors can get involved, including advising patients on how they can benefit



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A Call for Clinicians to Act on Planetary Health

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Humanity is causing accelerating global environmental change on the planet. The climate graphs show an unacceptable upward trend and portray high risk for the health of the world and global populations. We are not only doctors



Moving forward

- Continue to expand our network
- Work towards reducing the environmental footprint of family medicine
- Support initiatives in communities around the world





Thank you