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The Ability of Family Physicians in the Caribbean to Promote

Planetary Health Concepts and the Challenges of Implementing Changes in Practice

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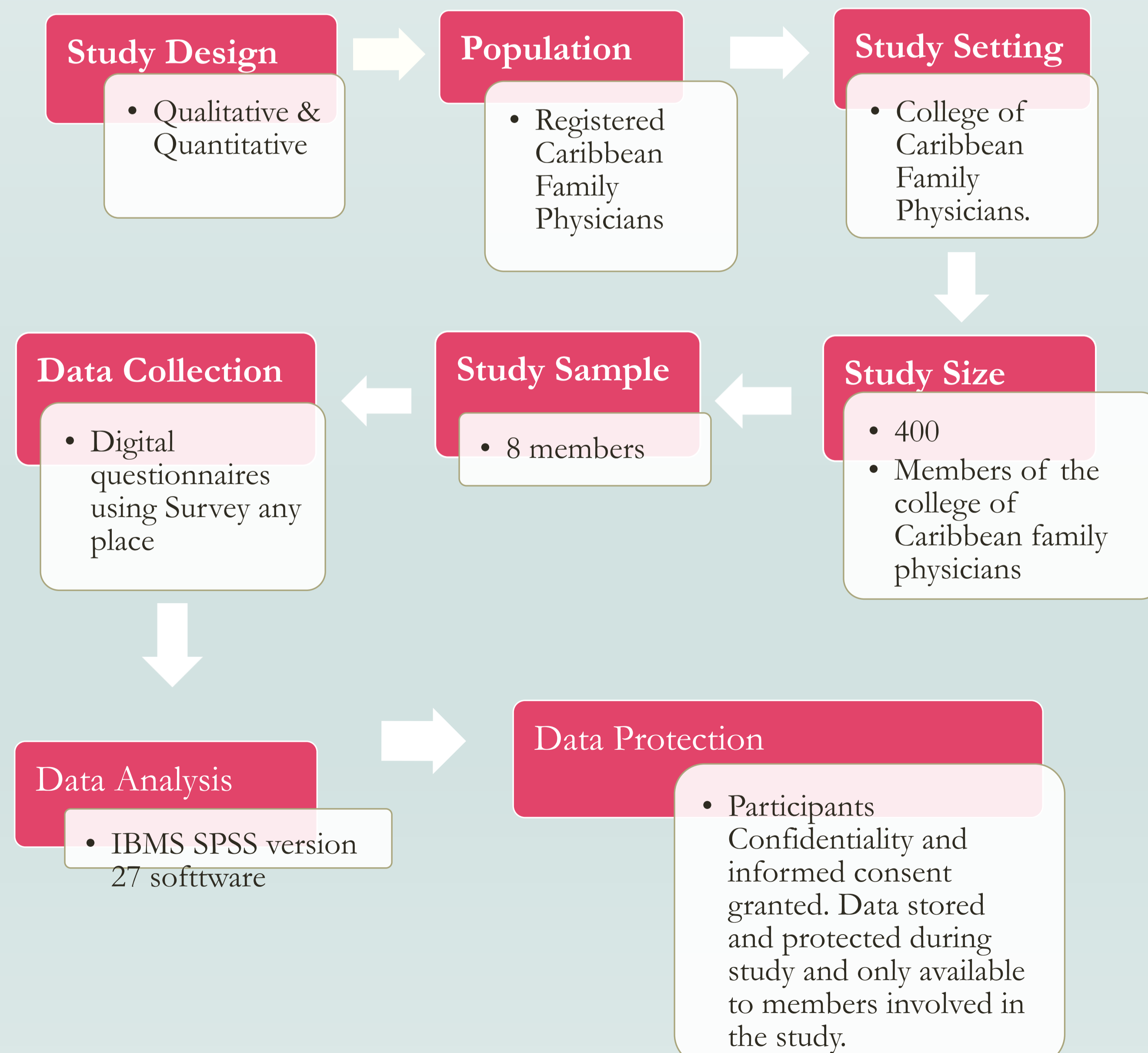
Introduction

The global environment is rapidly changing and the subsequent effects on human health are devastating. Planetary Health is a field focused on characterizing the human health impacts of human-caused disruptions of Earth's natural systems. It has been determined that Family Physicians (FPs) are the best suited to advocate and raise awareness of Planetary Health. The purpose of this research is to assess FPs in the Caribbean, their knowledge of planetary health, their ability to implement planetary health concepts in their practice, and the challenges that may impede implementation.

Objectives

- To explore ways in which Family physicians can promote planetary health policies and treatments.
- To identify the challenges to the implementation of planetary health-conscious treatments and policies within the Caribbean.
- To determine the challenges faced by FPs to implement planetary health-conscious treatments.

Methodology



Results

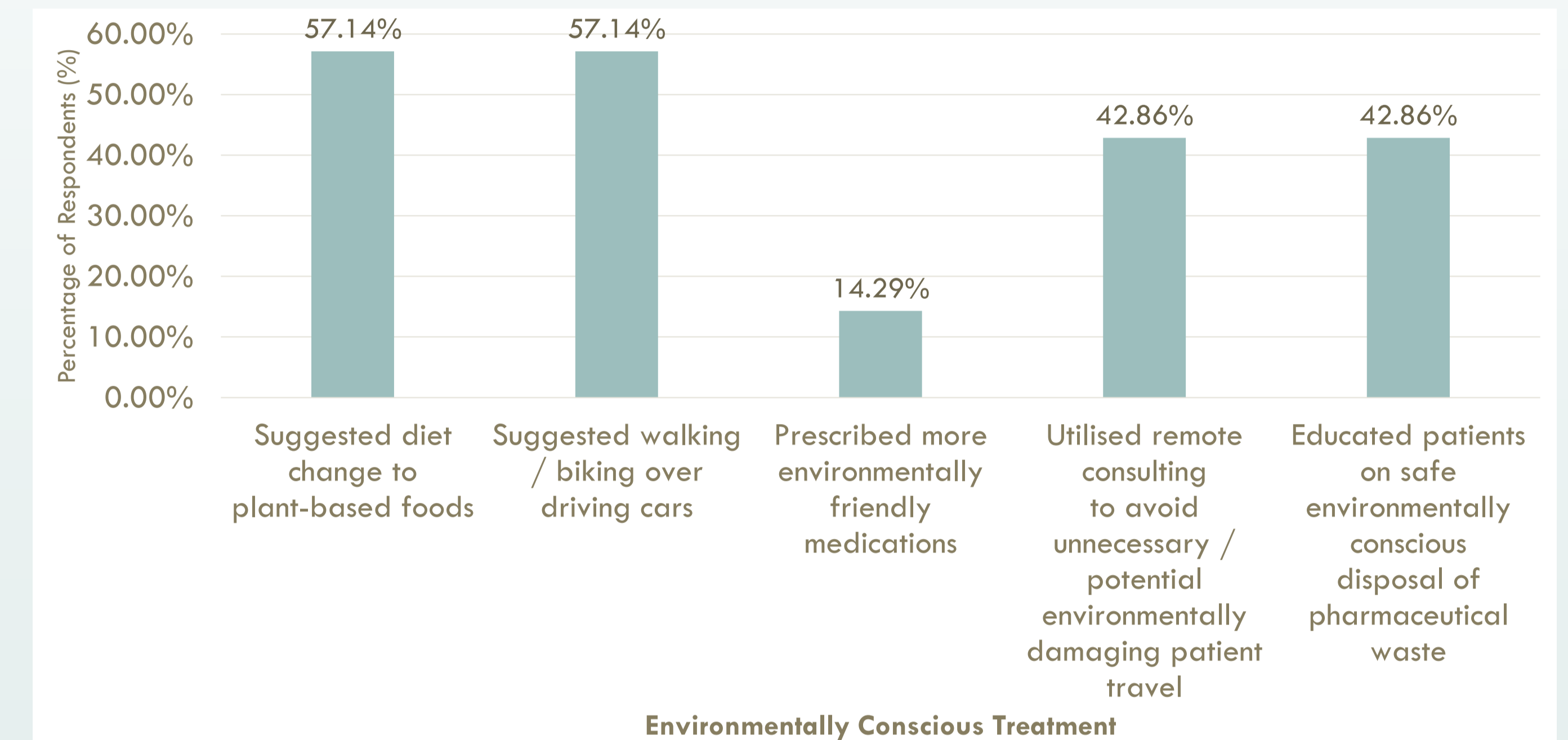
Table 1: Showing the Opinions of Family Physicians / General Practitioners Regarding Their Role In Implementing Planetary Health, Climate Change and Environmentalism

Statement	Frequency of Opinion				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Family Physicians (FPs) / General Practitioners (GPs) should inform patients on planetary health	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
FPs / GPs should inform patients on the health impacts of climate change	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
FPs / GPs should be updated about issues as they relate to planetary health and the health of their patients	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
FPs / GPs and their peers should be aware of the health impacts of climate change	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%
FPs / GPs should inform the public (patients, family, friends, acquaintances etc.) about planetary health and the health impacts of climate change	42.9%	42.9%	14.4%	0.0%	0.0%
FPs / GPs should advocate for environmentally sustainable clinics, hospitals and offices	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 2: Showing Challenges Faced by FPs/ GPs in Implementing Planetary Health-Oriented Treatments and Practices

Challenge	Percentage of Respondents in Agreement
Poor patient adherence to planetary health-oriented treatments	100.0%
Lack of time during consultations	85.71%
Patient disinterest in discussing planetary health	85.71%
Lack of support from peers	85.71%
Lack of support from the government	85.71%
Lack of knowledge about planetary health	71.43%
Lack of resources (printed materials etc.)	71.43%
Patients' unwillingness to adhere to planetary health treatments	71.43%
Planetary health-oriented treatments are less effective	42.86%
Other barriers	14.29%

Bar Chart 1: Showing The Prevalence of Environmentally Conscious Treatments Implemented by Family Physicians



Discussion

- Due to low responses and completion rates of our study's survey, it was difficult to make generalizations and directly assess family physicians' prior knowledge regarding planetary health
- 100% of respondents indicated that they believe climate change, a major constituent of planetary health, is real and a majority believe that climate change affects human health.
- Family physicians show an overall favorable attitude towards their roles in the implementation of planetary health-oriented treatments and practices
- Family Physicians confirmed numerous challenges hindered the implementation of the planetary health practices such as patient hesitancy to adapting to more sustainable treatment plans.

Conclusion

- Data collection based on our sample size has revealed that there is a need for FPs/GPs and other health care professionals to discuss the importance of Planetary health.
- Main issues in implementing planetary health were poor adherence to planetary health-oriented treatments, a lack of time during consultations, a lack of support from the government and colleagues and patients' disinterest in discussing planetary health.
- Continuing medical education and seminars are required to encourage FPs to implement planetary health policies in their practice.

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