

What does Education for Sustainability have to do with Health Sciences and Medicine?

“Our world class researchers are making a difference and breaking new ground to address global health care challenges. Their research influences health care policy, delivery and clinical practice.”

(<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/healthsciences/about/approach.page?>)

“The Faculty of Medicine leads innovative learning and discovery for better health across the lifecourse.”

(<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/medicine/about/index.page?>)

Maintaining human health is integral to sustainability. Topic areas of relevance to sustainability already in the health sciences curriculum include:

- **Human wellbeing:** maintaining human physical and mental health and wellbeing; maintaining the wellbeing of healthcare professionals as well as their patients.
- **Equality:** ensuring equal access to healthcare; intergenerational and intragenerational equity; how health care can overcome barriers to genders e.g. menstrual care enabling girls to attend school every week in the month.
- **Fostering empathy and understanding:** understanding the experiences of other people and cultures and how our choices affect other individuals and the environment;
- **Environmental resourcefulness:** minimising waste; sourcing of resources; supply chain management.
- **Globalisation:** the role of media, materials and technologies in driving sustainable development across the globe; expressing and addressing global challenges such as environmental degradation, politics unrest, global inequality; understanding diverse cultural backgrounds.
- **Population:** empowering people to make informed family planning choices; obesity crisis and global poverty.
- **Environmental degradation and health:** the impact of environmental challenges on human health e.g. climate change, air pollution and loss of years at the end of life.

Key skills for health practitioners which sustainability teaching cultivates: teamwork; leadership; problem-solving; oral and written communication skills; self-management; time-management; critical thinking; emotional intelligence; empathy.

Find out more: Contact Julia Kendal (j.kendal@soton.ac.uk) for more information including case studies on teaching sustainability in this area.