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Does participating in community gardens promote sustainable lifestyles in urban settings? Design and protocol of the JArDinS study

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INTRODUCTION

Urban gardening may lead to health benefits by interconnecting ecosystem health and human health. However longitudinal studies based on quantitative data are needed to investigate multiple health benefits associated with community gardening. Here we describe the protocol of JArDinS study.

OBJECTIVE

To describe the JArDinS study, which aim is to assess the effect of community garden participation, considered as a natural experiment, on sustainability of gardeners' lifestyles.

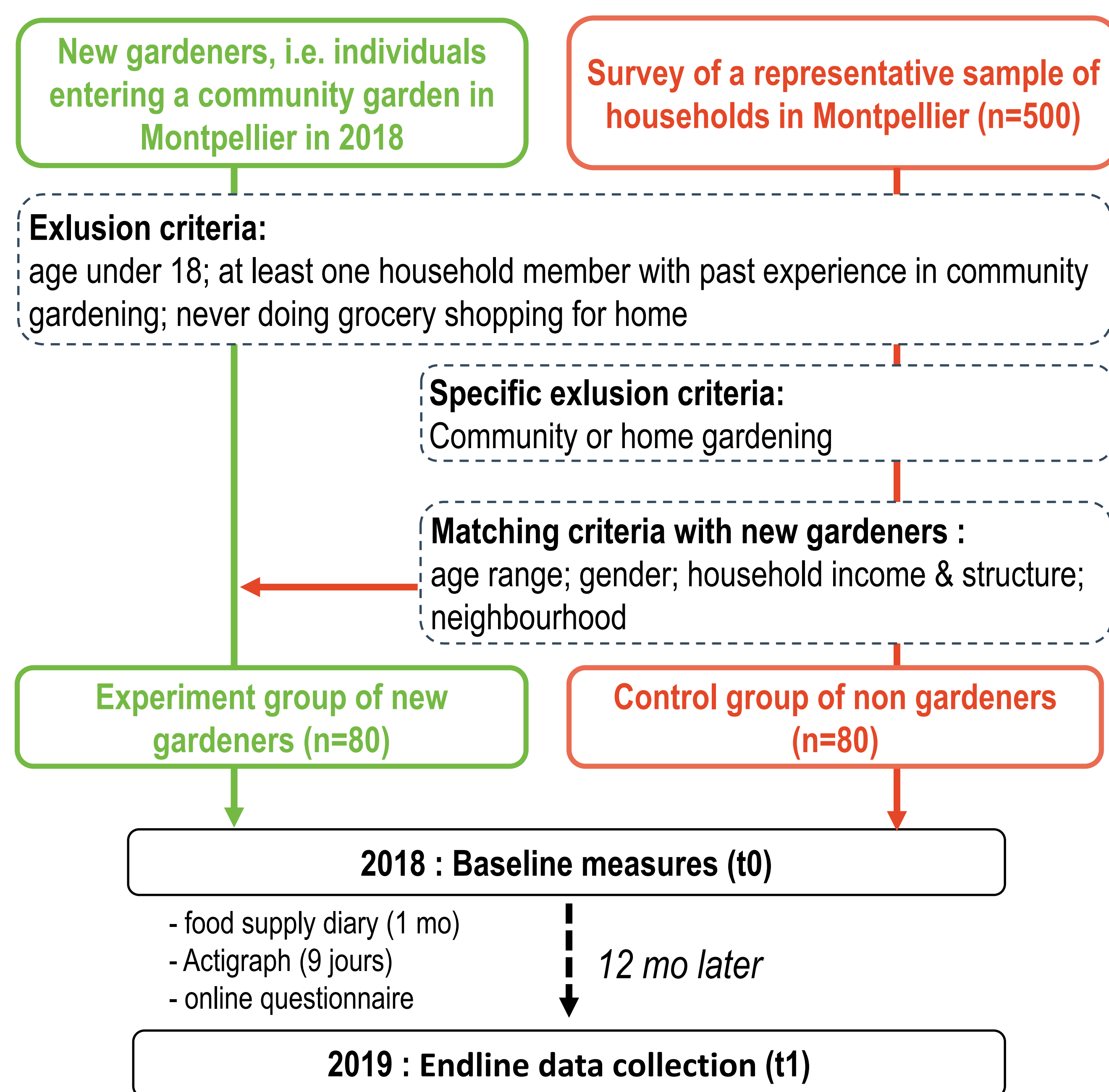
METHODS

Population : adults living in Montpellier (France).

Experiment : natural experiment consisting in participating in a community garden

Impact evaluation : The impact of participating in a community garden on sustainable lifestyles will be evaluated within a quasi experimental design by comparing the changes of gardeners' lifestyles who have recently been involved in a community garden (natural experiment group, n=80) vs. volunteers who do not garden in a community garden or at home (control group, n= 80).

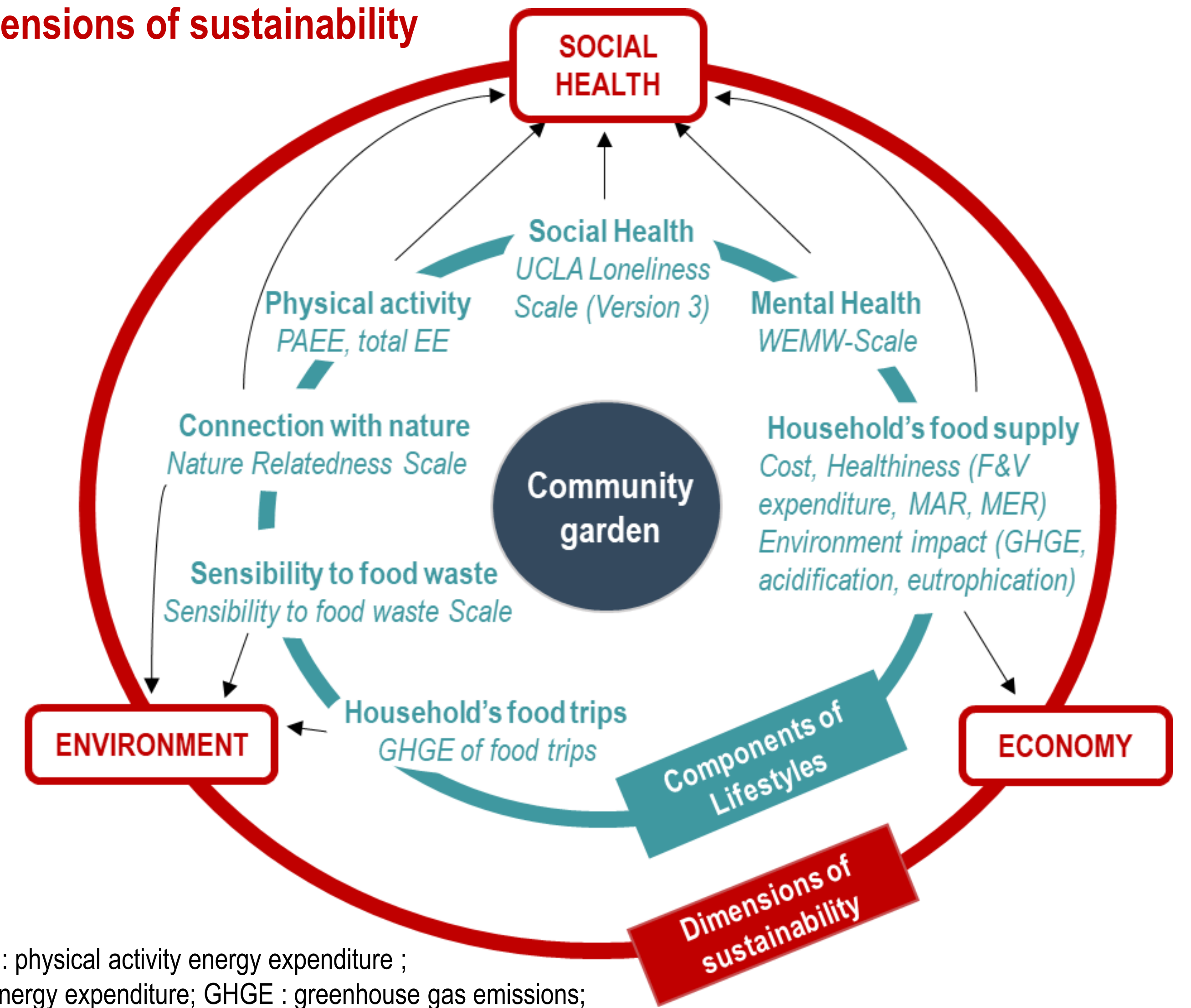
Figure 1. Overall plan study



Data collection tools :

- *Food supply diary* : records details of participant's household food supply (food purchases, food gift/donation, potential crops from the garden) and related trips (origin/destination and mode of transportation) over 1-mo period.
- *Actigraph* : energy expenditure and physical activity assessed by triaxial accelerometry. Participants are instructed to wear the Actigraph on right side of the hip for 9 consecutive days.
- *Online questionnaire* : assesses mental and social health, sensibility to food waste, connection with nature, socio-demographic variables and gardening experience.

Figure 2. Investigated components of the lifestyles and associated dimensions of sustainability



PAEE : physical activity energy expenditure ;
EE : energy expenditure; GHGE : greenhouse gas emissions;
F&V : fruit & vegetables; MAR : Mean Adequacy Ratio; MER : Mean Excess Ratio

CONCLUSION

Change of outcomes after 1 year will be compared between individuals from the natural experiment and from the control groups.

This study based on a robust quasi-experimental design allowing causality evaluation will provide information about the impact of participating in a community garden on gardeners' lifestyles taking into account the different dimensions of sustainability.



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