

# **Lifestyle Medicine: How Physicians are Fighting Chronic Disease without a Prescription Pad**

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# Leading causes of death in the USA in 2015 according to the CDC<sup>5</sup>

- ▶ Heart disease (633,842)
- ▶ Cancer (595,930)
- ▶ Chronic lower respiratory tract disease (155,041)
- ▶ Unintentional injuries (146,571)
- ▶ Cerebrovascular accident or stroke (140,323)
- ▶ Alzheimer's disease (110,561)
- ▶ Diabetes Mellitus (79,535)

# Leading Causes of Death in Adults are Related to Lifestyle<sup>3</sup>

- ▶ Poor diet
- ▶ Tobacco use
- ▶ Physical inactivity
- ▶ Excessive alcohol consumption

3. Mokdad AH, Marks JS, Stroup DF, Gerberding JL. Actual causes of death in the United States, 2000. JAMA. 2004;291(10):1238-1245.

# Most physicians lack confidence, knowledge and skill to counsel patients about lifestyle interventions

- ▶ Among the 620 respondents in a survey of family physicians, only 49% felt competent prescribing weight loss programs for obese patients.<sup>4</sup>

How one patient changed  
my career and personal  
life...

Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization from 1946:

***Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.***

# What is Lifestyle Medicine?

- ▶ **Definition:** Lifestyle medicine is the evidence-based practice of helping individuals and families adopt and sustain healthy behaviors that affect health and quality of life. Examples of target patient behaviors include, but are not limited to, eliminating tobacco use, improving diet, increasing physical activity, and moderating alcohol consumption.<sup>1</sup>

# Features of Lifestyle Medicine

- ▶ Emphasis on promoting behavior changes that allow the body to heal itself.
- ▶ Focus on evidence-based optimal nutrition, stress management and fitness prescriptions
- ▶ Patients are active partners in their care
- ▶ Treats the underlying lifestyle causes of disease
- ▶ Physician/Provider educates, guides and supports patients to make behavior changes
- ▶ Medications used as an adjunct to therapeutic lifestyle changes
- ▶ Patient's home and community environment are assessed as contributing factors.



# Should all physicians promote lifestyle medicine?

- ▶ **YES!**
- ▶ The basic level includes ALL health care providers. That they understand lifestyle is a significant determinant of health and an important modifier of individual patient responses to pharmaceutical or surgical treatments. At this level all physicians should use lifestyle interventions as an adjunct to their standard treatment protocols.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ The second level is specialty care practiced by LM experts as a separate, eventually board certified, medical specialty where lifestyle interventions are the main focus of treatment and pharmaceutical or surgical treatments are an adjunct to treatment when necessary.<sup>2</sup>

# Lifestyle Medicine practice team

- ▶ Physician
- ▶ Licensed dietitians or nutritionist
- ▶ Exercise physiologist, coach or personal trainer
- ▶ Psychologist, licensed therapist, health coach
- ▶ Physician extenders, nurses, MA

# Basic lifestyle medicine interventions: nutrition

- ▶ Federal dietary guidelines vs current scientific evidence
- ▶ Protein
- ▶ Carbohydrates
- ▶ Total fiber
- ▶ Total fat
- ▶ Saturated fat
- ▶ Cholesterol

# Basic lifestyle medicine intervention: physical activity

- ▶ Benefits of regular exercise
- ▶ Why exercise should be prescribed with dietary change
- ▶ Physical activity recommendations from ACSM

# Basic lifestyle medicine intervention: stress management

- ▶ Relaxation techniques
- ▶ Cognitive behavioral therapy
- ▶ Mindfulness: meditation, breathing techniques, progressive muscle relaxation
- ▶ Habit formation

# Basic lifestyle medicine intervention: tobacco use cessation

- ▶ Tobacco cessation counseling
- ▶ Medications

# Basic lifestyle medicine intervention: interpersonal relationships

- ▶ Prevention of social isolation
- ▶ Accountability

# What we are doing at the Health Oasis and the results so far...

- ▶ Case study 1
- ▶ Case study 2
- ▶ Case study 3



Where to go for more  
information

American College of Lifestyle  
Medicine  
[lifestylemedicine.org](http://lifestylemedicine.org)