



Summer School On Evidence Based Lifestyle Medicine



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Summer School on Evidence-Based Lifestyle Medicine is a part of the University of Split School of Medicine project – Internationalization of Higher Education. This booklet will provide you with important information about this course.

What is it and why do we need Lifestyle Medicine?

Lifestyle medicine is a new paradigm in medicine. It is a new field, but it is growing in momentum and it is on its way of becoming an independent specialty in USA, UK and Australia.

The worldwide leading causes of morbidity, disability, mortality and associated societies' costs are chronic diseases. We need urgent solution for this massive burden. We need solution both globally and locally, to stop squandering our resources: our health, our money and, eventually, our life. According to the World Health Organization, this is possible. They estimate that as much as 75% of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, as well as 40% of cancer would be prevented, should we eliminate four major risk factors for non-communicable diseases (1). Those factors are tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, and harmful use of alcohol, which lead to four metabolic changes: raised blood pressure, overweight/obesity, raised blood glucose and raised cholesterol (2). All of these risk factors are modifiable, lifestyle-related behavioral factors embedded into our physical, social, economic and political environments. As such, they are largely preventable, while the diseases they cause are treatable and oftentimes reversible. Hence, the key to successful treatment and, ideally, reversal of chronic diseases is the application of the health behavior change in the domains of healthy nutrition, adequate sleep, appropriate physical activity, suitable stress management and avoidance of risky behaviors like smoking and other substance dependences. These approaches form the pillars of lifestyle medicine.





Lifestyle medicine treats lifestyle causes of diseases, through forming active partnership with patients and involving allied professionals, aiming at both long-term health benefits and increased quality of life.

People usually take good care of their pets, cars and other belongings. For instance, not many people will use the wrong petrol type for their car. Not many people will skip a visit to the veterinary clinic when their pet doesn't behave as usual. So why do we tend to skip a visit to the clinic when we have some early health related warning symptoms, like pain or dizziness or just a funny feeling in the gut? Why do we put wrong food and drinks in our bellies? Why do we keep smoking even though we know it hurts us? The explanation is far from being simple. The solution is, luckily, less complicated. The solution is lifestyle medicine. Our usual, conventional approach in medicine is most commonly just treating symptoms of chronic diseases for the rest of the patients' lives. Unlike this approach, lifestyle medicine is addressing the true and underlying causes of the leading health problems in our modern societies. These root causes are our daily habits.

Lifestyle medicine is defined as „a branch of evidence-based medicine in which comprehensive lifestyle changes (including nutrition, physical activity, stress management, social support and environmental exposures) are used to prevent, treat and reverse the progression of chronic diseases by addressing their underlying causes. Lifestyle medicine interventions include health risk assessment screening, health behavior change counseling and clinical application of lifestyle modifications.

Lifestyle medicine is often prescribed in conjunction with pharmacotherapy and other forms of therapy.“

<https://eulm.org/what-is-lifestyle-medicine>

What are the aims of the Summer School on Lifestyle Medicine



We initiated this summer school in order to equip you with knowledge, teach you a set of skills, give you usable tools, and point to the procedures, which will help you deal with chronic diseases in your current or future clinical practice. The ultimate goal is to successfully prevent, causally treat and possibly reverse chronic lifestyle-related diseases in your patients. No,

we are not talking about time machines and getting back in time. We are talking about the power of our bodies and physiological processes to heal themselves, when they have appropriate substrates and freedom from detrimental inputs, assisted with medications when needed.

What are you actually going to learn? To answer this question, let's point out the differences between conventional medicine and lifestyle medicine. Conventional medicine treats individual risk factors, and patients are passive in the process of receiving care by professionals, while clinicians bear the burden of responsibility to deliver the effective cure for hard-to-treat conditions (3). Conventional medicine places the emphasis on diagnosis and prescribing medications in order to manage the disease, while the environment and other circumstances and contexts of the patients are usually neglected (3). In contrast to this approach, lifestyle medicine treats 'faulty' lifestyle and environmental causes of health problems, patients have to be active partners, who also need to take responsibility for their own health, while the emphasis is placed on motivation for the change, which has to be for a lifetime in order to prevent chronic diseases and its' consequences (3).

The unique features of lifestyle medicine include the importance of motivating the patients to undertake the active role in restoring and maintaining their health. It can be applied to every patient in every medical practice, and it demands a team of allied health care professionals in a collaborative care model (4). In order to succeed, physicians need to cooperate with experts such as nutritionists, exercise physiologists (or exercise coaches or personal trainers), nurses (or medical assistants), psychologists (or health coaches), and



others as needed (5). Even more importantly, the collaborative, partner-based relationship with the patient has to be formed. Another distinctive feature is that by tackling one of the lifestyle behavior, you instantly affect many different health outcomes. For example, with the intervention in the dietary habits of the patient in order for the patient to lose excessive weight, the positive health outcomes will also affect blood pressure, lipids and glucose levels, sleep, mood, and possibly lead to less pain in the joints, just to mention some results, which are visible, measurable and detectable by the patient. How good is that? The old saying of “killing two birds with one stone” truly applies in lifestyle medicine. Or even more birds, in due time. Sorry, birds.

To be honest, lifestyle medicine is not an easy walk in the park all the time. There are obstacles on the path of the practitioner in achieving the ultimate goal of the improvement of health and well-being. The biggest challenge in lifestyle medicine is to get people to want to change their behaviors, which is the question of motivation. How to start talking to people about lifestyle change? How to get people to think about changing, and then to do the steps within the process? The next challenge is to ensure the life-long adherence or behavior change maintenance. How to maintain the accomplished? If you would like to know how to get started when you talk to people about lifestyle change, how to motivate your patients into taking the first steps, and ultimately, how to maintain the accomplished, you should join this summer school in lifestyle medicine.

Who can participate?

Students or graduates from medicine, sports science and kinesiology, nutrition, psychology and all other allied professions in the field of biomedicine are welcome. If you have ever questioned the current approach of thinking about and treating chronic diseases, you will be well fitted in this course.



At the end of the summer school, the participants will:

1. Have in-depth knowledge of the field of lifestyle medicine and its importance to patients' health
2. Adopt a positive attitude toward lifestyle intervention and promote the application of this field, on a personal level and in daily medical practice
3. Acquire an overall view of the principles of nutrition for health and in common diseases
4. Acquire knowledge and skills in prescribing physical activity for health promotion and in common illnesses; know how to evaluate patients' level of physical activity and how to motivate them to action
5. Understand the association between stress and deteriorated health, and acquire tools for managing their own and their patients' stress
6. Receive tools to support patients in smoking cessation
7. Learn about the relationship between sleep and health, and acquire tools to identify and treat sleep problems
8. Receive and experience a variety of tools in the field of coaching, motivational interviewing and more, intended for the management of sessions with patients, aimed to support and guide health changes
9. Receive a certificate of attendance and 2 ECTS points (in case they need them)

What will you do at the Summer School on Lifestyle medicine?

The program is designed as a one-week course and takes place at the University of Split School of Medicine, in Split, Croatia.

There will be several introductory lectures, many small group seminars, and hands-on practicals. Professionals who use lifestyle medicine tools and procedures in their daily practice will guide you.



Program (25 teaching hours during one week):

- Can we all reach a (healthy) hundred? Introduction to lifestyle medicine
- Lifestyle medicine: why, who, and how
- Fundamentals of health behavior change
- Motivational interviewing and other lifestyle medicine tools
- Nutrition for life. Prescribing Mediterranean diet as an example of a healthy dietary pattern and lifestyle
- To sleep (enough) or not to sleep? Prescribing a good night's sleep in health promotion and disease prevention
- How to get and stay moving? Prescribing appropriate physical activity in health promotion and disease prevention
- How and where to find a vent? Prescribing coping with stress in health promotion and disease prevention
- Substance use and abuse: how to stop smoking?
- The lifestyle vs pharmacological treatment
- Group seminars / workshop
 1. Creating a healthy and sustainable dietary plan
 2. Stress – why should we try to keep it under control? How?
 3. How to get enough (and which kind of) physical activity?



Who are we?

We are enthusiasts, physicians, nutritionists, kinesiologists, teachers and other biomedical professionals. We firmly believe that our health care system is in a state of crisis, and we need to reshape our ways of thinking and treating health challenges we face. We are aware that we have a 'sick-care' system on the edge of bankruptcy, and we urgently need to turn it into the 'health-care' approach to save and regain the health of our people. The first step is to include education on lifestyle change interventions. This is what we are doing here. We are starting the true health-care 'reform' by educating the next generation of health care workers who will treat the true causes of chronic diseases, not its' symptoms.

Important thing to remember is that chronic diseases are not our destiny, they are avoidable (preventable), treatable (ideally their causes, not symptoms) and reversible with

appropriate lifestyle. Lifestyle medicine may be the way forward to get there. We believe that it is time to introduce the practice of lifestyle medicine into the mainstream healthcare, in order to respond appropriately to the health needs of our modern populations. You are cordially invited to join our mission. We invite you to join us in this new chapter, learn the concepts and get tips on how to practice lifestyle medicine.

If you want to learn about ways to incorporate lifestyle medicine approach into your practice, join us in our beautiful city of Split in Croatia!

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