

OptiHealth Institute

# The Last 10 Years

## Seminar Notes

In this seminar, we're going to take a close look at how one's lifestyle impacts one's health and longevity. This can be most clearly seen when we look at a person's last 10 years of life.

First, we are going to watch a short video: **The Last 10 Years**. Afterwards, we will review several important issues that are portrayed in the video. The video uses a split screen, telling two very different stories, so please watch carefully.

### Watch video: The Last 10 Years

Wasn't that a powerful message? Your lifestyle has a profound impact on your health and longevity! The contrast is clear – and sobering. Although most Americans will spend their final decade (or more) with sickness and disability, the good news is – you can change your future by changing (choosing) your lifestyle and making your health last.

Let's take a few minutes now to consider HOW your daily choices have a real-life impact, positive or negative, on your health and longevity. There are 10 questions for us to consider.

#### Q1. What medical condition was the frail old man suffering from?

Do you think he was trying to recover from a Heart Attack? or a Stroke? Or, do you think he might have been suffering from terminal Lung Cancer? or end-stage Emphysema (a chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)?

This is kind of a trick question. Actually, the frail old man was suffering from BOTH, a recent Heart Attack AND a chronic lung condition – TWO vital organs were failing him at a relatively young age.

**A1: The correct answer is: Heart Attack and Emphysema**

#### Q2: What unhealthy behavior caused the frail old man's heart and lung problems?

**Eating foods high in saturated fat?** High fat diets certainly increase blood cholesterol leading to plaque build-up in the arteries and often resulting in a heart attack – but the man wasn't obese as you might expect from a high fat diet.

**Eating highly refined carbohydrates?** Eating foods with lots of sugars, oils, and salts, and very little fiber, often leads to Type 2 Diabetes, which also increases one's risk of having a heart attack, but he wasn't obese as you might expect from a high sugar diet.

**Not exercising enough?** A lack of exercise is also a major risk factor for obesity and heart disease leading to a heart attack – but here again, the man was thin. Also note that these diet and exercise risk factors for a heart attack don't explain the man's lung disease.

**Smoking?** We generally associate smoking with all sorts of cancers, especially lung and throat cancers. So, the question is: Does smoking also cause heart and vascular problems? Not "just" a wide variety cancers?

The answer to that question is definitely, YES – Smoking can cause heart attacks and strokes even if you're thin, eat right, and exercise.

**A2: Smoking caused the frail old man's lung AND heart diseases.**

Smoking has long been known for being one of the worst things you can do for your health. It's a wonder anyone smokes any more, but I know a few smokers and when I

ask, How can you continue smoking when you know how much damage it does? What do you think they say? “I’m only hurting myself.” But are they?

**Q3: Who was negatively impacted -- hurt -- by the frail old man’s smoking habit?**

Was he hurting only himself? Or was he hurting himself and his wife? Or maybe he was hurting himself, his wife, and his children?

Some of his children probably started smoking themselves in their late teens, because of the example of their father’s smoking habit. That hurts!

Or, worst of all, was the frail old man hurting himself, his wife, his children, and his grandchildren? Because he won’t be around much longer to share in their lives.

**A3: Smoking hurt everyone around him, especially those he cared about most, not just himself.**

Even if the frail old man recovers from his heart attack, we know smoking shortens life expectancy by 10 to 20 years, even more sometimes, but in addition to a shorter lifespan, we also need to realize how much smoking impacts the person’s health and quality of life long before their early demise.

**Q4: How severely was the frail old man’s quality of life being impacted by his choice to smoke?**

Not at all? a little bit? a fair amount? quite a bit? or a devastating amount?

**A4: Yes of course, a devastating amount!**

The man’s choice to light up – cigarette after cigarette, day after day – wreaked havoc on his health!

Most smokers start in their teens. So, after 20 years, when they are still only in their 30’s, their unhealthy lifestyle has already done serious damage.

What seemed to be a harmless temporary choice to smoke was actually a long-term and severely damaging choice – a choice that resulted in a lifetime of poor health and an early death.

**Q5: If the frail old man knew how much he would suffer and lose by choosing every day to smoke, do you believe he would have changed his lifestyle? - Explain.**

Would you say: Yes, he would have changed his lifestyle, because no one would choose to suffer so much.

Or would you say: Yes, he would have stopped smoking, IF he got the help that he needed.

Or would you say: No, he would not have changed his lifestyle, because he probably knew he should quit, but he just didn’t try hard enough.

Or would you say: No, he was never going to stop smoking, because he knew the damage his smoking was doing and there was plenty of help available to quit, but he refused anyways.

This question is a little tougher, because each scenario is plausible in different circumstances for different people, but the best correct answer is:

**A5: Yes, he would have stopped smoking IF he got the help that HE needed.**

Most smokers, and most people in general, even if they are aware of the consequences of their unhealthy behavior – for support to truly be effective, it must meet the specific needs of that specific individual.

**Q6: What was “modern medicine” able to do for the pre-maturely frail old man?**

Partial surgical resection? Chemo and radiation therapy? Palliative (“comfort”) care?  
Or a whole lot of NOTHING?

The correct answer to this question DEPENDS on who you ask.

If you ask his health care team, the doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists (the list goes on), or even if you ask his health insurance company, according to them, “modern medicine” is able of doing a whole lot for the frail old man.

If medically indicated, he would get surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, and months of hospice care, which would include an oxygen tank, a wheelchair, and even a special kind of hospital bed that would practically allow him to live in the bed 24 / 7!

That’s a pretty good deal, right? What more could anyone ask for?

But if you ask the frail old man, the patient, compared to the life he wanted, the life he could have had, IF he had gotten the help he needed years earlier to quit, according to him, all that modern medicine, from the patient’s perspective, was a whole lot of NOTHING!

**A6: ?** - I will let you decide who is right: the suffering patient or the dysfunctional health care system.

**Q7: How much was the old man’s healthcare costing him? and his family? and society?**

Some people think we shouldn’t even ask this question, because you can’t put a price on human life. But whenever there are choices involved, we need to consider the costs of each alternative. So in this case of a preventable disease, what costs are involved?

Money? Time? Resources? Freedom?

**A7: That’s right, all the above!**

It costs everyone – in almost incalculable ways – and all for an easily preventable condition. I’m not saying we shouldn’t treat when necessary; I’m saying we should work harder to avoid unnecessary expenses and unnecessary suffering – in the first place, through better health education, and more available and effective support services for therapeutic lifestyle change.

The status quo of “modern medicine” is simply unacceptable.

**Q8: What was the POSITIVE impact (the benefits) of the HEALTHY man’s lifestyle?**

Health? Energy? Independence? And many years of LIFE

**A8: Yes, all the above!**

By simply committing to a healthier lifestyle, the wonderful benefits of health, energy, independence, and many years (10, 20, maybe even 30 extra years) of productive and enjoyable life are all ours for the choosing – benefits most of us sadly take for granted most of the time – until we lose them.

**Q9: Which future life do you want for your future self?**

A shortened lifespan plagued by sickness and disability? OR a full lifespan with health and vitality?

**A9: Of course, your future self wants to enjoy a full lifespan with health and vitality!**

But you do know, it's not just about smoking. Smoking rates with its diseases and death rates have drastically decreased in the United States. However, other lifestyle diseases with their diseases and death rates have been increasing.

So, it's important to ask yourself, in what unhealthy behaviors have I chosen to indulge? What are my unhealthy behaviors going to cost me down the road in a few short years? What kind of life, and what level of health, could I start enjoying, if I learned how to make healthier choices for myself?

These can be tough questions sometimes, but here is the toughest question of all...

**Q10: Are you willing to change your lifestyle** (to learn how to make better choices) **to improve and protect your health?**

Yes or No.

**A10: ? - Only you can answer this question for yourself.**

Or maybe, before you can answer this question, you might want more information about therapeutic lifestyle change – What is it? How does it work? How will I know if it is working for me?

That is what [www.OptiHealthChoices.com](http://www.OptiHealthChoices.com) is all about! It's about YOU choosing YOUR optimal lifestyle for YOUR optimal health.

We are here to help you with whatever healthy lifestyle choice is right for YOU. We will help you learn WHAT you can do, and HOW you can do it.