

**MEN AND WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER TO MANAGE PROBLEMS  
RELATED TO HEALTH AND WELL BEING**



**Public Lecture by Dr. Matthew Loscalzo  
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Garren Auditorium, Basic Science Building

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Our research has focused on helping people to solve problems related to chronic illness and getting men and women to work together as a team. In this highly interactive discussion, we will talk about problems common to the elderly and develop some practical ways to manage problems related to chronic illness, as a group.

People are living longer and for many, healthier lives. Many serious diseases that were once certain to greatly shorten a person's life are now managed much more effectively over long periods of time. In fact, for the many people who receive adequate medical care, even cancer and cardiac disease can now be managed as a chronic problem and not necessarily a life-threatening illness. This is a relatively new situation and is an important improvement in both the length and quality of people's lives. This is really good news.

Even though medical care has greatly improved, most elderly people will have some chronic illness or disability as a normal part of the aging process. Chronic illness is a very common but unwelcome intruder in the lives of elderly couples with some people having more than one medical concern. It is also common for both partners to have medical problems for which there is no cure. For example, arthritis, cancer, cardiovascular (blood pressure and heart disease), cerebrovascular (strokes), dementia, depression, diabetes, falls and injuries, pain, insomnia, memory loss, hearing impairment, osteoporosis, and visual impairment are all more common in the elderly than in younger people. Clearly, any one of these problems will make enjoying life a lot harder, for both the person and their committed partner.

Because it takes time, effort, and money to cope with a chronic illness, virtually all people feel some degree of distress. When two or more people in the same home have special needs, the burden can become even more onerous. In our research, we have found that when people are in active treatment to control or cure a disease, there are many problems that are of serious concern to them. For example, making decisions about treatment options, coping with lack of energy and fatigue, pain control, depression, concerns about money, and many more. We will discuss some of these problems.

What is important to remember is that there are things that you and your family members can do to manage these problems. It is important for women and men to work together to insure that quality of life is maximized and that resources are always used wisely. Woman and men have been solving problems together since the beginning of time. Managing illness-related problems are no different than other serious challenges men and women have had to manage in the past. In our discussion, we will work as a group to identify the strengths that women and men individually bring to the problem solving process and then we will talk about the benefits or synergy of their combined efforts.